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**Recognition and Production of Pronouns
by Francophone Learners
of English as a Second Language**

Mary Jo Martens

A Thesis

in

The TESL Centre

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

June, 1988

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ABSTRACT

Recognition and Production of Pronouns by Francophone Learners of English as a Second Language

Mary Jo Martens

The questions addressed in this thesis concern the personal pronoun system in the interlanguage of francophone learners in intensive ESL programs. Possible differences between what the learners do and what they know, particularly with regard to the possessive determiners his/her, were investigated. Three tasks were employed: The Picture Card Game (oral communication); The Birthday Party (grammaticality judgment); and an Oral Interview (discussion of the grammaticality judgment task). A tendency was found for subjects to overgeneralize the masculine in oral production although there was also evidence of female subjects overgeneralizing the feminine. The learners were generally not accurate in judgments of misused his/her. The tendency was to over-accept the masculine form. Subjects' recognition of incorrect his/her preceding non-kin nouns was significantly superior to their ability to recognize incorrect usage preceding kin nouns. Female subjects significantly outperformed male subjects in all judgments on possessive determiners. The Oral Interview indicated that

the judgments of the learners were genuine and based on rules active in their interlanguage.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	v
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Appendices.....	viii
Chapter 1 Context of the Study.....	1
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature.....	12
Chapter 3 Subjects and Procedures.....	30
Chapter 4 Results.....	39
Chapter 5 Discussion.....	65
Bibliography.....	85
Appendices.....	93

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Summary of Tasks and Subjects Investigated	38
2 Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Person	43
3 Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Case	44
4 Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Gender	46
5 Number of Students at Five Accuracy Levels on TBP	50
6 ANOVA Results for Gender and Kinship Distinctions	53
7 Matched t Tests for Mean Scores: Masculine/Feminine and Kin/Non-kin	54
8 Matched t Tests Excluding Subjects Making No Accurate Judgments: Masculine/Feminine and Kin/Non-kin	55
9 Matched t Tests for Mean Scores: Kin and Non-kin	56
10 Matched t Tests for Mean Scores Excluding Subjects Making No Accurate Judgments: Kin and Non-kin	57

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
1 Possible Combinations of Possessive Determiners and Nouns	93
2 Examples of Picture Card Game Pictures	95
3 Transcripts of Speech Samples: Low, Average, and High Proficiency	98
4 Text of the Grammaticality Judgment Task: The Birthday Party	105
5 Warm-up Page for the Grammaticality Judgment Task	115
6 Coding Sheet for PCG Analysis	117

Chapter I

Context of the Study

The field of applied linguistics encompasses a broad spectrum of language-related areas. Given the many disciplines having contributed to its foundation-- psychology, sociology, education, and linguistics -- such a range is to be expected.

One major area of applied linguistics is that which focusses upon second language acquisition (SLA). A primary focus within that domain has been the study of the language of a learner proceeding toward mastery of a language other than his mother tongue. This language-in-state-of-development has been baptized under several different names: learner language and transitional competence (Corder, 1967), approximative systems (Nemser, 1971), and interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). It is this latter term which has become prevalent. Selinker defined interlanguage (IL) as "the separate linguistic system of the learner, observable for analysis" and, as such, important for theoretical reasons in the study of second language learning (p. 35). Although some of the underlying concepts put forth in the original article have been reconsidered, the term itself remains a key word in SLA.

Adjemian (1976) was the first applied linguist to fully discuss the nature of IL as a natural language containing a system of linguistic rules. He characterized IL as having a systematicity which "assumes the IL system has internal consistency in those parts responsible for generating the structures for which the learner has grammatical intuitions" (p. 307). Furthermore, he noted "the salient characteristic of ILs is that they are linguistic systems which, by nature, are somehow incomplete and in a state of flux" (p. 308). This property of IL allows for influence from both L1 and L2, a condition which Adjemian refers to as permeability, and which makes IL data crucial in contributing to our understanding of the process of second language learning.

Thus, IL has become a topic of interest and research for applied linguists world-wide. Questions pertaining to morphology, phonology, lexicon, and syntax have been examined using IL data. (See Rutherford, 1984 for a state of the art article on IL syntax, and Language Learning 1984 for further discussion of IL.) Many current SLA theories and hypotheses have been generated based on revelations provided by IL data. For example, the roles of input, transfer, markedness, and universal grammar (UG) in language acquisition have all been studied within the framework of IL, as has the question of the learning/acquisition dichotomy proposed by Krashen (1981).

This thesis is the result of a strong general interest in the topics referred to above and a very specific interest in the question of possible differences between what language learners do and what they know. It is, within the IL domain, an examination and characterization of the personal pronoun system, with emphasis on the third person singular possessive determiners his/her as produced and recognized by young francophone learners in an intensive ESL program.

My interest in the underlying question of differences between what a learner does and what he knows has been a longstanding one, the product of years of classroom teaching. An example is found in a very common situation--the frustration of dealing with the difficulty many ESL learners have in acquiring the 3rd person singular /s/ in the simple present tense. An easily explained invariable rule, it frequently remains unacquired, "fossilized" by even the most fluent English second language speaker despite the fact that the speaker often knows and understands the form well enough to self-correct when provided with an indication that some error has been made.

Interest in the specific research question concerning possessive determiners in the IL of young learners is of far more recent origin. Since August, 1986, I have participated in a research project directed by Professors Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada. The purpose of this project is to

investigate the development of English language skills of students in intensive ESL programs which are being provided by a growing number of school boards in Quebec. It was involvement in the investigation of these intensive programs which led to the topic and the subjects of this thesis.

The programs under study were initially developed in response to the concern of a number of francophone parents who were dissatisfied with the level of English proficiency being achieved by their children in traditional ESL programs. While the factors bearing on the Quebec language learning situation need to be acknowledged, a detailed examination lies beyond the scope of this thesis.¹

With the expansion of French immersion programs and the changes in the political and economic role of French, there

¹ It would appear that a combination of too little teaching time administered in a "dripfeed" method (Stern, 1985) as well as lack of training and weak English language skills of many ESL teachers in Quebec (Acheson, d'Anglejan, de Bagheera & Tucker, 1978) were contributing factors to low levels of proficiency being attained by learners. Furthermore, until about twenty years ago, the situation in Quebec had not been one which provided motivation to most francophones and anglophones to learn the language of the other group. The 20% anglophone population, largely centered in Montreal, was economically dominant and generally seemed to feel little need to learn the language of the majority. (See Vaillancourt, 1985, for an overview of the relationship between language and economics within the Quebec/Canada context.) The 80% francophone population, spread throughout the province, may not have perceived a need for English, and certainly had limited opportunity for its use. (See Schumann, 1978 for discussion of sociological and affective components considered necessary for successful second language acquisition, and Gardner & Lambert, 1972, for seminal work dealing with the role of motivation in second language learning.)

has been considerable improvement in the level of French proficiency achieved by anglophones in Quebec. (See Genesee, 1983, for an overview of immersion programs in Canada.) However, there was no such development in the English proficiency of francophone students. Whatever the causes of the students' lack of English proficiency, and surely they were myriad, some francophone parents were anxious. These parents saw anglophone children heading toward bilingualism while their own children were not. Since English immersion, that is, using English as a medium of instruction, was (and is) illegal under language legislation in the French-language schools of Quebec, an alternative was sought.

The school boards of Greenfield Park and Mille Iles were forerunners in the development of intensive ESL programs. In Greenfield Park, an innovative program, created by teacher Iolanda Bolduc, was implemented in grade 5 at the Ecole St. Edmond in 1978. ESL was taught for five consecutive months. (The core subjects of French and math were taught in the alternate term.) With the exception of a few hours a week of physical education and art, the entire class day was devoted to learning English. The program combined an array of activities leading to developing "communicative competence" although the need for grammatical accuracy was not completely discounted. (See Brumfit & Johnson, 1983 for discussion of communicative language

teaching and Canale & Swain, 1979 for discussion of a theoretical framework for CLT.)

Until 1985, Greenfield Park and Mille Iles were the only school boards regularly offering this five-month intensive program. Since the 1985-1986 school year, however, the number of boards providing such a program has grown to almost 20 and the projection for 1988-1989 is for the addition of even more (Lightbown, et. al., 1988). Today, the general format of the Greenfield Park program is adhered to in most of the intensive ESL programs offered by school boards across the province. Those with which I am familiar include, in addition to Greenfield Park: Asbestos, Coaticook, Granby, Taillon, St. Eustache, Ste. Thérèse, and Val D'Or. Some boards have chosen to offer the program in grade 6 rather than grade 5 and there appears to be a slight variation on the amount of emphasis given to grammatical accuracy, but the programs are basically very similar and students can be assumed to have had highly comparable ESL learning experiences.

In 1986-1987, as a research assistant on the project studying these intensive programs, I spent many full days observing eight classes in four schools from three different school boards. I also spent time testing students. The four grade 5 classes which I observed, (two each term) were taught by native speakers of English. There were approximately 28 students in each class. One teacher had 17

years of teaching experience, 14 of those years in ESL. The other teacher had nine years experience, over seven years in ESL. Although the classes were in two different schools and the specific activities and materials were developed by different people, the pedagogical approach was very similar. Classroom activities generally centered around a theme such as "food", "the family", or a forthcoming holiday. There was individual, pair, and group work for skit-writing, role-playing, show-and-tell, information gap activities, etc. Listening and speaking were emphasized over reading and writing. The four grade 6 classes which I observed (two each term) were taught by francophones with fluent, native-like command of English. There were approximately 30 students in each class. One teacher had 6 years of teaching experience, all in ESL. The other teacher had 23 years experience with 14 of those years in ESL. These four grade 6 classes were very much like the grade 5 classes. Activities also centered around themes, and were of a nature similar to those employed by the grade 5 teachers. These four classes were in the same school board and used the same materials (developed or adapted by the teachers and the ESL curriculum advisor). The teachers met regularly to discuss events and activities.

These intensive programs have been highly successful in responding to the concern over the ESL skills of the francophone youngsters involved. Parents and students alike

have expressed great satisfaction. Testing has shown the children to have attained levels of English proficiency far surpassing those of their peers in the regular programs (Lightbown & Spada, 1987). Most of these young learners are able to communicate well and are comfortable doing so. Furthermore, in cases where communication fails, students are capable of employing strategies (paraphrase, use of gesture) to repair lost communication. In many cases, students' performance on listening tasks is better than that of secondary level students with total exposure to ESL instruction about equal to that of the intensive program students (about 450 - 500 hours) but which had been spread out over a period of five years rather than five months (Lightbown & Spada, 1987). (For a comparison of accuracy and fluency between an intensive class and a group of secondary students who had received approximately the same number of hours of instruction, see Paris, 1987.)

Despite the apparent success of these intensive programs, the students remain normal young learners. Their knowledge and control of the grammar and vocabulary of English are limited. Through classroom observation and oral testing of these students, certain aspects of the development of their English language skills became evident. In brief, where elements in the IL diverged from the target language, there seemed to be little idiosyncratic divergence. Most error types were highly predictable for

students in all classes. These errors were of a nature that might be expected from any francophone learning English, for example, the missing plural /s/, ("two boy"), adjective misplacement ("a skirt blue"), the inappropriate presence or absence of /h/ ("she 'as two balloons"), etc. During analysis of oral test results, one particular element caught my attention -- the misuse of the possessive determiners, his/her. The following dialogue provides an example:

Student: It's a little girl -- with a blue skirt.

Interviewer: mhm.

Student: and, uh, three red balloons, uh, on his hand.

This learner was generally fluent and accurate. Nevertheless, a problem with the possessive determiner existed. Through classroom observation and, particularly, through oral testing with the Picture Card Game (described in chapter III under Procedures), it became clear that this error was common to most learners. The "problem" of its acquisition was intriguing for a number of reasons.

1) After well over 100 hours of classroom observation, I was certain that the learners had not been exposed to inaccurate input, that is, incorrect usage by the teachers.

2) The male/female distinction is one which is both evident and salient in most discourse situations. For learners aged 10-12, there can be no doubt that they make such a distinction. (See again the example above for explicit reference -- "It's a little girl.")

3) Preliminary analysis indicated that students were not simply following the system of their mother tongue, that is, transferring the French system of gender marking for possessive determiners. (The possessive determiner system of French differs in several ways from that of English; these differences will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.) In fact, there were numerous cases where, had the student used the French system of gender marking, no error would have been observed.

Aware that the gender error in the possessive determiner was common among students in oral performance, I nevertheless questioned the assumption that students did not, in fact, know and understand the appropriate usage. My hypothesis was that the students would reveal themselves to be more accurate in gender distinction and the use of the possessive determiners his/her when engaged in a task focussing on grammatical form rather than on oral communication. Thus, the specific research questions were formulated.

1) Is there a difference between what these ESL learners produce as possessive determiners and what they recognize as appropriate usage?

2) If so, what are the patterns which emerge?

In order to investigate the first question, I examined spontaneous production data elicited by the Picture Card Game (PCG) from 30 grade 6 students who were completing the

five-month intensive course. I then designed a grammaticality judgment (GJ) task to elicit recognition of both correct and incorrect uses of his/her. Since a GJ task, unlike spontaneous production, eliminates the possibility of avoidance or circumlocution, it provides for less ambiguity in analysis. I administered this test to two grade 5 classes and two grade 6 classes just completing the intensive program. There were 107 subjects. Finally, I interviewed 22 of these 107 subjects to discuss their choices on the GJ task and their understanding of the third person possessive determiner in English. Details of all three tasks are provided in Chapter III.

The research questions of this thesis touch upon a variety of issues and themes currently prevalent in SLA research. These include: the variability and systematicity of IL; the possible role of markedness as an explanatory factor in L2 acquisition; the viability of GJs tasks; and suggestions of "two ways" to language development. Studies pertaining to these topics, as well as previous studies dealing specifically with the acquisition of the possessive determiner, will be reviewed in Chapter II. In Chapter III the subjects and procedures will be described. Data analysis and results will be provided in Chapter IV. Discussion of the results and suggestions for further study will be the subject matter of Chapter V.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The general area of study of this thesis is the personal pronoun system in the interlanguage of 10-12 year-old francophone learners in intensive ESL programs. Particular attention is focussed upon investigating the acquisition of the possessive determiners his/her.

Pronoun Systems in English, French, and Interlanguage

English and French pronoun systems are similar in some respects. Both mark natural gender in third person singular subjective and objective pronouns (he/she, il/elle; him/her; lui/elle; le/la). The third person singular genitive pronouns are also marked for gender but the systems of the two languages for employing these pronoun forms differ significantly.

In French, the choice of possessive determiner is based on the person and number of the possessor(s) and the number and grammatical gender of the object or person "possessed." This gender distinction disappears when either the possessors or the objects possessed are plural. (See Appendix 1 for examples of the French possessive determiner system.) In English the choice of the possessive determiner depends on the gender and the number of the possessor and is

not affected by the person, gender, or number of the "possessed." For example, in the English sentence "Charles saw his mother", his is determined by the masculine singular possessor whereas, in French, "Charles a vu sa mère", sa (fem.) is determined by the singular feminine object.²

French and English may also differ in usage of the possessive determiner. In some cases, where English calls for a possessive determiner, French requires the use of an article. For example:

She washed her face

Elle s'est lavé la (the) figure

This difference in use is found most commonly when the possessed item is a body part.

A number of studies having investigated the acquisition of the possessive determiner attest to the difficulty of its mastery. Adiv (1980) examined the language development of anglophone learners in an early French immersion program in Quebec. In addition to analysis of acquisition of the possessive determiners, she examined

² Another way in which French differs from English is that all nouns have grammatical gender: each noun is masculine or feminine. For example, table and chair are feminine (une table; une chaise). Book and pen are masculine (un livre; un stylo). In some instances in French, different grammatical gender may even indicate different meanings, for example, un livre (a book), une livre (a pound). English, of course, has no grammatical gender.

all determiners, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. Discussion here, however, will deal only with her analyses regarding the possessive determiner. Adiv found:

Practically all errors consisted of the substitution of the corresponding masculine forms for the required feminine forms, i.e., mon was substituted for ma (my), son was substituted for sa (his/her). For example, *Il dit à son maman... (Il dit à sa maman) 'He tells his mother'....the incorrect use of *son could be influenced either by the general tendency to overgeneralize the masculine determiners or by the fact that the possessor is a little boy. (pp. 30-31)

However, Adiv did not find that she had enough tokens of such usage to determine the cause. She did find that when all determiners were compared for proportions of errors in masculine and feminine, the "common pattern" was that the masculine determiners were "mastered" before the feminine.

Another study which focussed on personal pronouns is that of Felix and Simmet (1982). This study also investigated acquisition in a classroom setting, studying German-speaking students (aged 10-13) learning English in two schools. Analyzing the number of pronoun errors, Felix and Simmet found that 47.68% of the errors were accounted for by gender misuse; 25.88% by the choice of the wrong

person, 11.62% by the wrong number, 4.65% by confusion of the possessive pronouns with other personal pronouns, and 3.38% by case errors. The authors note systematicity in the learners' performance and claim that there is a clear hierarchy in the acquisition of pertinent features.

case >number >person >gender

That is, case is acquired before number which is acquired before person, and gender is the last feature to be acquired. Control of one element would imply control of elements in lower positions on the hierarchy. For example, when gender has been acquired, it is implied that everything lower on the hierarchy -- person, number, and case -- has also been acquired. The authors claim that learning individual features of a word, which Wode (1976) has called "decomposition" when describing acquisition in a natural milieu, also exists when the milieu is the formal classroom. It might be noted that, of the data presented in this study, little, if any, appears to be 'natural speech'. That is, most examples cited seem to be "display question" responses. (See Long & Sato, 1983 for discussion of teachers' questions.) For example:

T: Have you a duster in your hand? S: No, she hasn't.

T: Has your mother a duster in the house? S: Yes, I have.

This type of activity could very well distort data although

the fact that Wode had found similar results in a natural setting does add strength to the claim of Felix and Simmet.

A study which more broadly examined the question of gender in SLA is that of Garavito-Bruhn (1986). This work investigated the acquisition of Spanish by francophone high school students. The focus was on gender and number in the noun phrase and gender and number agreement between nouns, articles and adjectives. Discussing her findings Garavito-Bruhn states: "It is interesting to note that a higher rate of error is found when the head noun belongs to the natural gender category and/or is clearly marked for gender" (p. III). "...the acquisition of agreement with nouns marked for gender which are usually +human is more difficult than agreement with unmarked forms" (p.125).

These observational findings of Garavito-Bruhn as well as those of Adiv and of Felix and Simmet are supplemented by the theoretical and experimental work of Zobl (1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985). Underpinning Zobl's empirical work are two theoretical concepts, projection and markedness. (See Peters, 1972 for a discussion of the "projection problem.") Zobl notes:

A learner's final-state grammar not only has to predict the input data which made up the learner's experience with the target language; it must also have the capacity to predict a potentially

infinite number of forms which were not encountered in the input. (1985, p. 329)

That is, from a limited amount of data, the learner projects added information. Zobl explains:

Put in its simplest formulation, a projection model of acquisition claims that, in acquiring knowledge about target attributes w,x,y, present in a set of input data, a learner also comes to have knowledge about one or several attributes that were not part of the input data set. (p. 330)

Zobl has investigated the projection model through study of the acquisition of the possessive determiners his/her. One study (1983b) was based on oral production of the determiners. Results revealed that there was an implicational relation in accuracy between kinship and non-kinship entities being possessed.³ That is, correct use of the determiners preceding kinship words was found to imply control of the rule for determiners preceding non-kinship words. The reverse situation was not found to be true. Also, in accord with other research which has revealed a tendency to overgeneralize the masculine, Zobl found that learners were "overwhelmingly" overgeneralizing his,

³ Zobl refers to possessed kin such as "his mother" as HUMAN and to possessed body parts or inanimate entities such as "her arm, his watch" as NONHUMAN. I have chosen to refer to the distinction using the terms kin and non-kin since this better expresses the semantic relationships. I find, however, that neither terminology is fully satisfactory.

supplying it where her was called for. Zobl interprets this overgeneralization as indicating that the feminine is the marked form, and the masculine is the unmarked. In addition, he contends that the "human domain" is the marked form, the nonhuman is the unmarked.

According to Zobl: "Markedness, in this model, is a function of the projectibility of data-informed knowledge to other, as yet nonexperienced attributes of a language" (p.1). Thus, Zobl predicted that:

- 1) knowledge of the determiner rule obtained through intensive exposure to unmarked data, i.e., NONHUMAN examples, should fail to project to the marked, HUMAN, domain; and
- 2) knowledge of the determiner rule obtained through exposure to marked data, i.e., HUMAN examples, should project to the unmarked, NONHUMAN, domain (p.5).

To further investigate this issue, Zobl carried out a controlled experiment. Fifty-two low-level francophone ESL learners were randomly assigned to conversation groups where they were exposed to different kinds of data on possessive determiners. Zobl reports:

The HUMAN data group received input examples with kinship terms only; the NONHUMAN data group was exposed to input examples with body parts and

inanimate entities, and the MIXED data group received examples from both domains. (p. 7)

During the session, learners were asked questions (designed to elicit possessive determiners) to which they responded orally. The investigator modeled correct sentences when errors were made with the possessive determiners but did not make overt corrections or give explicit metalinguistic explanations.

Pretests had been administered and post-tests followed the session. These tests consisted of "15 pictorial items which were accompanied by 20 orally posed questions designed to elicit (written) responses containing HIS and HER in both the HUMAN and the NONHUMAN domains" (p. 7). Comparison of test results showed that:

the HUMAN data group made the largest gains of all three groups. More importantly, they not only improved in the marked, HUMAN, domain, but the knowledge benefits of exposure to the data generalized to the nonexperienced, NONHUMAN domain. No such generalization to the nonexperienced domain can be made out in the post-exposure performance of the NONHUMAN data group.

(p. 9)

Thus, Zobl concludes that exposure to marked linguistic items can promote acquisition of the unmarked.

Interlanguage Systematicity

One of the difficulties encountered in the study of IL as a system is that it is both permeable (subject to influence from outside the system), and variable (changing at a particular point in time.)

The permeability of IL is due to the fact that it is open to influence from both the source language and the target language. Studies dealing with the influence of L1 on L2 have existed throughout SLA research. However, recent research has shown that more is required than a simple contrastive analysis approach such as that advocated by Lado (1957). It has become evident that the role of L1 is far more intricate and complex than was suggested by earlier notions of "interference." That is, the behaviourist belief that the habits of L1 were directly and solely responsible for deviant target language forms is no longer accepted.

Empirical research such as that of Gass (1979) investigating transfer through study of relative clause formation and that of Schachter and Rutherford (1979) looking at transfer at the level of discourse, have greatly added to our appreciation of this complexity. Zobl's work, particularly that focussing on the interaction of development and transfer in second language learning (Zobl, 1980), has also been instrumental in broadening our understanding of this phenomenon. It has become clear that

not all non-targetlike performance can be exclusively attributed to L1 or L2. In recent years, work dealing with theories of markedness in second language acquisition (Rutherford, 1982; White 1984) and parameter setting (White, 1987) have provided an ever-expanding vision of the interrelationship of L1 and L2, as well as the role of universal grammar (UG), in interlanguage development.

The variability of IL also makes discussion of its systematicity problematic. Since any IL which has not "fossilized" (Selinker, 1972) is in a state of flux, how can systematicity be defined, studied and interpreted?

Tarone, Frauenfelder, and Selinker (1976) outlined a working definition describing as systematic that speech which "evidences an internal consistency in the use of forms at a single point in time"; "speech which is not systematic at a single point in time evidences 'variability'" (pp.97-98). However, since IL is highly influenced by task and circumstances, it is possible that it is systematic one way in one task and systematic in a different way in another task, that is, "systematically variable" (Labov, 1971). Furthermore, language development is nonlinear and there are roles played by factors other than syntax, morphology, and phonology -- for example, degree of importance in discourse (Huebner, 1985). This makes identifying and interpreting systematicity in IL a complex and difficult task.

In fact, IL performance has been found to be so situationally variable that it has been called "chameleon" by Tarone (1979). It is her contention that IL is most systematic in free, unattended speech. The result of attention focussed on speech, she claims, is to make the IL more open to influence from L1 and L2 and, therefore, less systematic. That is, Tarone believes

...the IL rule system should be least permeable in informal situations, when little attention is paid to speech, and most permeable and most variable in formal situations when the learner focuses attention on speech. (p .184)

Empirical work by Tarone (1985) examined variability in IL through the investigation of the English of Arabic and Japanese speakers. Using three tasks which demanded varying degrees of attention, Tarone obtained results indicating that more attention to task did not produce greater accuracy. Thus, if her results are accepted at face value, it appears that attention might not only lessen systematicity, but accuracy as well. However, I am unaware of any other empirical research which supports these findings.

Tarone also argues against any claim of IL development which posits a polar distinction between attention and inattention. She claims that IL consists of a continuum of styles. Thus, she is in fundamental disagreement with

Krashen's Monitor Model (1981) and his conception of two distinct stores of language knowledge, learned and acquired. According to Krashen, learning is conscious knowledge about a language where one is aware of rules and able to make explicit reference to them. Acquisition is a process much like the learning of one's first language and is what leads to fluency. Krashen claims that learning does not carry over into acquisition but exists in the form of a "monitor." His claim is that when a learner knows the rule, is focussed on form, and has sufficient time, the monitor may swing into action resulting in greater accuracy than with unmonitored performance. Thus, performance differences on two tasks are accounted for by there being two different systems involved. The general view that greater attention to form would result in increased accuracy, while contradicted by Tarone, is shared by many other SLA researchers.

Bialystok (1978) set forth a model which also distinguished between two elements in the language learning process, originally referring to them as explicit linguistic knowledge and implicit linguistic knowledge. Explicit linguistic knowledge included the conscious facts the learner had about the language, and the implicit knowledge was that information which was used automatically and spontaneously. In later work, (e.g., Bialystok, 1981) both theoretical and empirical, she has used the terms "analyzed"

and "automatic" knowledge. In Bialystok and Sharwood-Smith (1985) the concept has been further refined as a processing model which distinguishes between learners' knowledge and their control of that knowledge. The mental representation (knowledge) and the procedures for retrieving that knowledge (control) each function along a continuum. Thus, the model is in accord with Tarone, who also views IL as being a continuum although her focus is on sociolinguistic styles of the IL product while Bialystok and Sharwood-Smith focus on the IL development process.

Bialystok has also conducted empirical research examining the roles of formal explicit knowledge and intuitive implicit knowledge using an Aural Grammar Test. (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1978; Bialystok, 1979). Grammaticality judgment tasks were employed. Findings included the indication that implicit knowledge was used in making initial judgments of grammaticality, but any further analysis required formal explicit knowledge.

Another empirical study which examined the effects of time, attention, and explicit metalinguistic knowledge on task performance is that of Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984). They studied the effects of time and attention on the correct use of two Dutch word order rules by 32 adult learners of Dutch. A story retelling task was administered to subjects under four conditions (with and without time pressure; with attention on information, with attention on

grammar). Focus of attention on grammar was found to be a contributing factor toward accuracy while time pressure had no effect whatsoever. Subjects were individually interviewed immediately following the experiment so that the roles of explicit and implicit knowledge could be gauged. It was found that the performance of subjects with explicit knowledge was generally higher than that of those without such knowledge. However, it was also found that learners with explicit knowledge did not gain more from lack of time pressure and grammar focus than learners without such explicit knowledge. That is, all learners were equally influenced by time and attention whatever the state of their metalinguistic knowledge.

The authors discuss their findings in light of Krashen's Monitor Theory (1981) but note:

As long as Monitor Theory remains unable to empirically isolate the acquired system from the learned system, while continuing to claim that they are totally separate, Monitor Theory may well remain unaffected by some empirical data. Obviously, the value of a theory immune from empirical validation is bound to be limited.

(p.41)

Regarding their findings on the role of time, however, Hulstijn and Hulstijn do state:

Thus, it seems that time in itself is not a necessary condition for successful self-correction but focus on form generally requires time in order to bring about successful self-correction. (p.40)

Grammaticality Judgments in Interlanguage Research

Given the variability and particularities of 'system' in IL and the theories as to "two ways" to language learning, SLA researchers investigating IL development have frequently turned to a variety of tasks in order to ensure that their data were as complete, accurate, and meaningful as possible. In many of the studies described above, GJs have been employed alone or in combination with other tasks.

The precedent for GJ tasks in language research is well-founded. (See Chaudron, 1983, for an overview.) In early GJ research, the intuitions of adult native speakers on actual language samples were employed in order to confirm data for grammarians (e.g., Quirk & Svartvik, 1966). In first language acquisition research (Gleitman et al., 1972; Clark, 1974; De Villiers & De Villiers, 1974), GJ tasks were used to trace the development of the child's ability to make judgments and to examine linguistic development within cognitive growth.

In second language acquisition research (e.g., Schachter, Tyson, & Diffley, 1976; Schmidt and McCreary, 1977; Lightbown, Spada & Wallace, 1978; Arthur, 1980;

Carrell & Konneker, 1981, and many others), GJs have been employed to investigate a wide range of IL topics with a wide variety of subjects. While care must be taken to ensure that GJ performance results are examined together with other performance results, I believe their value to be justified and felt that such a task would be appropriate in pursuing the question of what subjects of this study know compared to what they do regarding the possessive determiners his/her.

Summary

The research concerning pronouns and possessive determiners reviewed in this chapter was highly instrumental in focussing this thesis on investigating the acquisition of the possessive determiners his/her. Despite regard for previous theoretical and empirical work, and my own observations (see Chapter I) about the difficulty in mastering third person singular pronoun gender, it nevertheless seemed counter-intuitive that clear and salient gender distinction would not be recognizable as correct or incorrect to the subjects under study. Even though the English and French possessive determiner systems for choice of gender differ, doubtlessly making acquisition more complex, I hypothesized that subjects would be far more accurate in judgment than in free speech. I was likewise not fully convinced that gender relating to "human" objects

possessed would be more difficult to acquire than that relating to "nonhuman." It seemed that further research was warranted.

Furthermore, it seemed likely that research into the recognition of correct and incorrect uses of the possessive determiners his/her would provide pertinent additional data regarding their acquisition. To the best of my knowledge, all tasks used in the research on pronouns which attested to the difficulty in acquiring pronoun systems (frequent gender errors, overgeneralization of the masculine, errors on pronouns referring to humans with clearly apparent gender) were based on production tasks, either oral (Adiv, 1980; Felix & Simmet, 1982; Garavito-Bruhn, 1986; Zobl, 1983b) or written (Zobl, 1983b). It seemed that the task type might have been responsible for a lack of attention to form and somewhat responsible for the high error rates generally observed. Therefore, a grammaticality judgment task was designed to provide a different sort of information on the possessive determiner in the IL of learners, that is, the recognition of correct and incorrect usage of his/her. Since a GJ task eliminates the possibility of avoidance or circumlocution, it was crucial in the search for additional insight into the possessive determiner in IL. As Schachter (1974) has stated: "If the student does not produce the constructions he finds difficult, no amount of error analysis is going to explain why" (p. 212). Use of a GJ

task made it possible to approach the issue of knowledge, or underlying competence in a way that other task types would not have permitted. The specific research questions regarding possible differences between what learners do and what they know could be addressed by this type of task. It would also allow for an examination of patterns of recognition in addition to the patterns of use which other task types reveal.

Chapter III

Subjects and Procedures

The research questions of this thesis concern the characterization of the personal pronoun system in the IL of intensive ESL learners and possible differences between what these learners do and what they know with regard to the possessive determiner in English. These questions have been examined through the use of three tasks. Task I was the Picture Card Game (PCG), an oral communication activity which was used with 30 students in a grade 6 intensive ESL class. Task II was The Birthday Party (TBP), a grammaticality judgment (GJ) activity based on a written text. This task was administered to 107 intensive ESL students from two grade 5 classes and 2 grade 6 classes. Task III was an oral interview (OI) in which 22 students from one of these grade 6 classes explained and commented upon the judgments they had made in Task II.

Task I: The Picture Card Game

The PCG is an oral communication activity involving sets of pictures (Lightbown & Spada, 1978). Each set consists of four pictures which differ from each other in some details. The four pictures are displayed so that they can be seen by the interviewer but are concealed from the

student. A corresponding set of pictures is presented, face down, to the student who chooses one. The task of the student is to describe that picture, providing enough information for the interviewer to identify the picture which has been chosen. It is to be noted that picture sets become more complex and differences in the details become less obvious as the task proceeds. (Appendix 2 contains examples of two sets of the pictures employed for the present study.) The goal of the PCG is to elicit "unmonitored" speech, that is, where the speaker is concentrating on meaning, communicating information, rather than on being attentive to formal accuracy.

On January 21 and 22, 1987, I administered the PCG to the 30 francophone students in a grade 6 intensive ESL class who were just completing the five month intensive course. There were 14 boys and 16 girls and the average age was 11. Each student was met individually in a small, private room, where the PCG was played and the students' speech was audio-recorded.

In the administration of this task, six sets of pictures were employed. The first set was used as a "warm up" to ensure that each student understood what was expected and also as an opportunity to alleviate any test nervousness. Learners' descriptions of the five sets of pictures which followed served as data for analysis.

All students were able to perform the task, that is, to provide enough descriptive detail so that I could correctly identify which card had been chosen. It was evident that some students were able to do so with far greater ease than others. (Appendix 3 contains samples of 3 transcribed speech excerpts exemplifying the range of language ability found among these learners.) Nevertheless, as stated above, all learners were able to successfully complete this activity.

Following the administration of the PCG, I transcribed the recorded proceedings from the five sets of pictures for all 30 students. Such transcription, while painstaking work, provides important data on the IL of the learner. It is especially useful in allowing one to search for evidence of systematicity in the underlying rule system of the IL. While it is possible to note systematicity to a certain extent by listening to speech samples, when this speech is transcribed, quantified analysis can be performed and documented. It is then possible to be far more precise. Thus, the transcriptions of the speech of the 30 subjects provided the database for the detailed analysis of their performance on Task I.

Task II: The Birthday Party

Despite the fact that frequent errors in use of his/her had been observed in the spontaneous speech (on the

PCG task) of the intensive ESL program students, I felt that such errors might well be apparent to the learners themselves when they were engaged in a task with a focus on form. It seemed that the clarity and salience of gender distinction might lead to correct recognition.

In order to test this hypothesis, I employed a grammaticality judgment (GJ) task which I designed for the age group under study. The immediate goal was to elicit recognition of correct and incorrect uses of his/her. In this way I hoped to obtain a more complete picture of the learners' underlying competence in regard to the possessive determiner. Additionally, even though these learners had received little form focussed teaching or correction, it seemed possible that results of Task II might provide evidence for the working of a "monitor" (see below) which assisted learners in recognizing correct usage, when they were focussing on formal accuracy.

Task II is called The Birthday Party (TBP). It is the story of a boy's 12th birthday party. The story is presented in booklet form and consists of nine pages. Each page is illustrated with a picture which is related to the text and contains from five to eight lines of double-spaced typed text. Syntax, vocabulary and storyline are simple so that the subjects might indeed be able to focus on form (see Appendix 4).

TBP text consists of 63 sentences, 32 containing an error. In the text his/her are correctly employed six times each and incorrectly 10 times each. Three of each six correct feminine forms are with kin possession, (e.g., her mother). Three are with body parts or inanimates, (e.g., her arm). The six correct masculine forms are also divided between three kin and three non-kin possessions. The 10 incorrect uses of his/her are likewise divided, five showing kin possession and five non-kin. An effort was further made to divide as equally as possible the tokens between those in which the gender of the possessor would be the same as the natural or grammatical gender in French, and those in which possessor and possessed had different gender, for example, her mother (sa mère); her brother (son frère). Attention to these details was prompted primarily by the work of Zobl on markedness, and on the projection principle for possessive determiner acquisition (see Chapter II).

In addition to the 20 gender errors, the text contains 12 errors of various sorts to serve as distractors (e.g., "She don't want to be late"). A number of the distractor items were errors typical of francophone learners; other items were included simply because they were able to be integrated into the story of the text.

A number of English native speaking youngsters were asked to complete the task. They had no problem in understanding the activity and were successful in

identifying nearly all the errors. (It is to be noted that these subjects ranged in age from eight to seventeen years.)

In June, 1987, I administered TBP to four intensive ESL classes in four different schools. Two were grade 5 classes and two grade 6. Instructions were very simply phrased to make certain that the task was understood since it was a type of activity students were not likely to be familiar with. Each class was told that I had written a story and that I had made some mistakes. I wondered if they could find the mistakes. They were asked to mark anything which they felt was not "good English" with a big X. Students were informed that there was never more than one mistake in a sentence and that not all sentences contained errors. They were also told that there were no spelling errors. Prior to beginning the task, the subjects were given a practice page to assist them in understanding the type of task awaiting them (see Appendix 5). After the practice sample was provided, time was allowed for questions and clarification.

In one grade 5 and one grade 6 class, the students were asked to silently read through the text twice. They were given unlimited time. In the other two classes, the students heard the story read on tape by a native speaker of English while they read along silently. They were asked to re-read the story silently and they then had unlimited time to complete the task. Each task administration took

approximately one-half hour. Thus, this task administration appeared to provide what Krashen (1981) considers the necessary conditions for the possibility of the "monitor" coming into effect: the learner must know the rule, be focussed on form, and have time. (It was my assumption that these learners had greater knowledge of the possessive determiners his/her than oral production indicated. My hypothesis was that, despite the different systems of French and English, the subjects would recognize incorrect usage of the possessive determiners.)

The students were already somewhat familiar with me since I had spent time observing their classes, and they understood that the test "didn't count for the report card". Almost without exception, they were highly cooperative subjects.

Task III: The Oral Interview

Due to the possibility that some of the GJs might have been of a spurious nature, it seemed important to obtain feedback on the task from the subjects. Also, I felt that a clearer picture of the IL rule system might emerge if the learners were directly addressed and questioned concerning their judgments. (See Coppieters, 1987 for details of a similar task carried out with adults.) I believed that the majority of the students had made genuine judgments based on

what they considered to be "good English." Interviews would provide the opportunity to verify this belief.

I also wanted to hear from students about what they understood of the English possessive determiner system. Since it was impossible to meet with each of the 107 subjects individually, one grade 6 teacher was asked if she would be willing to allow time for her students to discuss their performance on Task II. Students were invited to volunteer to meet with me, and 22 out of the 28 subjects present chose to participate. (There were 30 students in this class. One was absent for the GJ task and a second was absent during the OI.) All 6 of the subjects who chose not to participate were male.

Immediately following the task, each of the 22 subjects who had volunteered was interviewed individually, in a small private room. Making the atmosphere as comfortable as possible, I explained that I appreciated their time and that I was interested in learning what they thought were the errors in the story I had written. Then, with the booklet of the individual subject open on a table between us, we went through TBP page by page, noting what the subject had marked as incorrect and discussing the reason for the choice. The interviews were all done in one day and generally lasted from 5-10 minutes. They were audio-recorded and portions have been transcribed (see Chapter IV).

Summary

Three tasks were employed which examined the possessive determiner in the IL of young learners in intensive ESL programs. The first task emphasized communication, the second asked that the subjects focus on form and make grammaticality judgments, and the third encouraged subjects to reflect on and reveal the basis for their choices in the previous task. See Table 1 for a summary of tasks, types, and subjects. The procedures for analysis and the results of these tasks are the content of Chapter IV.

Table 1
Summary of Tasks and Subjects Investigated

<u>Task</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Grade</u>
The Picture Card Game (Oral Communication)	30	6
The Birthday Party (GJ of written text)	107	5/6
Oral Interview (Oral discussion of GJ)	22	6

Chapter IV

Results

Task I: The Picture Card Game (PCG)

Subjects' spontaneous use of pronouns in the PCG was analyzed. The first step of this analysis was to note and count all referential pronouns in the speech data of the 30 grade 6 subjects to whom the task had been administered. It was noted that subjects frequently supplied "he have" or "you have" where English would call for "there is" or "there are" in introducing picture descriptions, (e.g., "and on the plate you have a cake"). Since such forms were not, in fact, being used as referential pronouns, they were not included in the count. Also, when a subject made a false start, only the second pronoun token was counted. For example, "She, uh, she have long hair," was counted once for the pronoun she. Likewise, "She, uh, he have long hair" was counted once for the pronoun he. All other pronoun use was noted and tabulated for each student. (Appendix 6 contains an example of the coding sheet used.)

Once tabulation was completed, it was possible to determine patterns in the pronoun use of the subjects. These patterns of usage will be discussed according to person, case, and gender. Since tokens of plural pronouns were

exceedingly rare, they will not be discussed; only the singular forms will be dealt with.

It was found that according to their accuracy of pronoun usage, subjects could be classified in four non-exclusive categories. That is:

1) Some of the subjects provided tokens of pronoun forms which were always appropriate as to either person, or case, or gender. This does not imply that the forms were always present when called for in obligatory contexts but only, that when they were supplied, they were grammatically appropriate as to a feature referred to above. The performance of these subjects is referred to as "correct."

2) Other subjects sometimes used a pronoun correctly. They also overused a pronoun, that is, used it in place of another form. For example: "A girl, a teacher, he has sunglasses" where masculine gender was supplied in an obligatory context for feminine gender. The performance of these subjects is referred to as "overuse."

3) There were subjects who correctly provided a pronoun form in an appropriate context but who also sometimes substituted another pronoun or the definite article in place of the appropriate pronoun. Other subjects never provided the appropriate form but always substituted another form. "He have the finger in the mouth," exemplifies the definite article being substituted twice for the genitive form his. Substitution is most frequently the result of the

overgeneralization of a pronoun form but, as seen above, it may also result from overuse of the definite article. This type of performance by the subjects is referred to as "substitution."

4) There were also four subjects who supplied a pronoun form but never correctly. That is, the form was present in the IL of the subjects but apparently knowledge of appropriate use was not. Such subjects used a pronoun in contexts where another pronoun form was called for. (In all cases the masculine form was incorrectly supplied.) The performance of these subjects is referred to as "never correct."

Where totals equal less than 30, it is an indication that some subjects produced only one token or none at all. In all analyses a minimum of two tokens was necessary for inclusion of a subject in the analysis. Totals may also surpass 30 because of the frequent overlap between overgeneralization and substitution. That is, as noted above, most cases of substitution are due to the overuse of another pronoun. For example, in the sentence "One girl, he have a dress with a line," the overgeneralization of he is a substitution for she. However, as also previously noted, other substitution is accounted for by overuse of the definite article and some subjects provided tokens of both types of error.

Person

Analysis of the data revealed that first person pronouns were frequently supplied by the subjects (24/30) and always in contexts calling for first person. Second person was supplied less frequently (18/30). Of the 18 subjects who supplied the second person, 16 were accurately employing the second person. Two subjects overused the second person; one subject did so twice, the other subject overused the second person in 22 instances. The third person was frequently used by the subjects (26/30) with no incorrect use across person. Three of the subjects provided it in most, but not all, obligatory contexts. Thus, five occurrences of third person substitution are accounted for by an article having been supplied in place of a pronoun by three subjects who had also provided tokens of correct use (e.g., "in the hand he have three, uh, three balloon"). Second person was substituted by two subjects (e.g., "He don't like your teacher). A summary of pronoun use for person is found in Table 2.

Table 2
Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Person

First Person		Second Person	
	<u>N</u>		<u>N</u>
Correct usage	24	Correct usage	16
Overuse	0	Overuse	2
Substitution	0	Substitution	0
Never correct	0	Never correct	0
Third Person			
		<u>N</u>	
Correct usage		26	
Overuse		0	
Substitution		5	
Never correct		0	

N = Number of subjects having provided two or more tokens

Case

Pronoun use was analyzed according to subjective, objective and genitive cases, following Quirk and Greenbaum, (1979, p. 101). It was found that the subjective case was frequently supplied (25/30) and always used correctly except by one subject who overused the subjective in place of the objective saying, for example, "next to she; beside he." This subject also provided many correct tokens of usage. The objective case was supplied by fewer than half of the

subjects (12/30) but it was always supplied in a context which called for the objective case. The genitive case (provided by 17/30 subjects) was always used in a situation calling for genitive. This does not imply that the genitive was provided in all obligatory contexts, however. One subject also employed the definite article as did two others. Thus, there were 3 instances of substitution where the definite article "the" was provided when the context called for a pronoun in the genitive case. Table 3 provides a summary of pronoun use for case.

Table 3
Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Case

Subjective		Objective	
	<u>N</u>		<u>N</u>
Correct usage	24	Correct usage	12
Overuse	1	Overuse	0
Substitution	0	Substitution	1
Never correct	0	Never correct	0
Genitive			
		<u>N</u>	
	Correct usage	17	
	Overuse	0	
	Substitution	3	
	Never correct	0	

N=Number of subjects having provided two or more tokens

Gender

As for gender, it was found that the neuter form was provided by 24/30 of the subjects; it was never overused for another form. The masculine was substituted for the neuter by two subjects. The masculine was also frequently provided (22/30) but with complete accuracy by only 3 subjects. It was overused by 15 of the subjects and 6 of these subjects also substituted other forms (feminine or the definite article) for the masculine. Four of the subjects who employed it used it only incorrectly. The feminine form was supplied with much less frequency (12/30). Only one subject was completely accurate when providing the feminine gender. (Recall that a minimum of 2 tokens were required for inclusion in analysis.) Five of the remaining 11 who supplied the form also overused it. Seventeen subjects substituted other pronouns or the definite article for the feminine form. Among these 17 subjects were 6 who also sometimes provided feminine gender correctly. Thus, the pattern revealed is for more overgeneralization of the masculine and, consequently, more substitution in the feminine. The results of the analysis for gender are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Spontaneous Use of Pronouns: Accuracy for Gender

Neuter		Masculine	
	N		N
Correct usage	24	Correct usage	3
Overuse	0	Overuse	15
Substitution	2	Substitution	6
Never correct	0	Never correct	4
Feminine			
			N
Correct usage			1
Overuse			5
Substitution			17
Never correct			0

N=Number of subjects having provided two or more tokens

PCG Summary

Analysis of this task according to person, case and gender revealed that gender confusion was accountable for most pronoun errors. Such confusion occurred in the subjective, objective and genitive cases. While the neuter gender was always correctly used by the 24 subjects who supplied it, only 3 out of 22 subjects who supplied the masculine did so with complete accuracy. Of the 12 subjects who supplied the feminine, only 1 did so with complete

gender accuracy. This subject was completely accurate in both the masculine and the feminine. Two other female subjects were also completely accurate as to gender when using the masculine. Analysis revealed that a great many subjects overgeneralized the masculine in contexts calling for feminine forms. Consequently, there was a great deal of substitution seen for the feminine. Furthermore, it was revealed that feminine forms were provided with far less frequency (by 40% of the subjects) than were the neuter (provided by 80% of the subjects) and the masculine (provided by 73% of the subjects).

This analysis revealed that there were questions which could not be answered with data from a spontaneous production task alone. Were the students so focussed on the task of describing the pictures that they simply were inattentive to pronoun gender? That is, did they "know" how to select appropriate gender but not well enough so as to apply such knowledge while focussing on other aspects of their performance? Or was the gender distinction, in fact, largely unacquired?

Task II was designed to examine the issue of gender in the genitive case through study of the possessive determiners his/her. In addition to general difficulty in acquiring gender, these forms are particularly complicated due to the differing systems for possessive determiner gender choice in English and French. (See Chapter II.)

Task II: The Birthday Party (TBP)

The purpose of the second task, TBP, was to explore the question of what learners in the intensive ESL programs know as compared to what they do regarding the possessive determiners. The task was designed to investigate their ability to recognize correct and incorrect usage of his/her. That is, subjects were asked to focus on form and make grammatical judgments as to the appropriateness of the gender in possessive determiner usage. Subjects were 107 students from four 1987 intensive ESL classes (see Chapter III).

TBP contained 20 incorrect uses of his/her along with 12 correct uses. There were 12 other errors serving as distractors. Subjects were requested to mark with an X any word which they thought was not "good English." Results indicated that the subjects understood the task. That is, all students marked at least some words in the story booklet as being incorrect and most did so with the requested "X". A few students had not understood that there were no spelling errors and so some judgments were of spelling. For example, a number of students judged as incorrect my spelling of "balloons". Occasionally subjects marked more than one item in a sentence as being incorrect, indicating that they had not understood or did not remember that they had been told that there was never more than one mistake in

a sentence. A few of the subjects also provided corrections. Two subjects, when questioned following the task as to whether they had understood that correction had not been necessary, replied that they had understood but had wanted to correct.

To analyze the subjects' performance on TBP, all judgments, correct and incorrect, were noted. That is, each test booklet was examined and all judgments tallied. Thus, tabulation noted where a subject has:

- 1) correctly identified a misuse of his/her,
- 2) correctly identified a distractor error,
- 3) incorrectly marked as an error a word which was used correctly. A special note was made when a correct his/her was identified as erroneous. Additionally, it was noted whether the misjudgment occurred in a sentence which was completely correct or one which contained an error which the student did not identify. These three areas will be discussed separately.

Judgments of erroneous his/her

Analysis of the ability to make accurate GJs revealed that only 10 out of 107 subjects were highly accurate (80% or above) in indicating erroneous use of his/her. An additional 19 were moderately competent (60-75%) in doing so. Twenty-two subjects had very limited ability (30-55%).

Twenty-six were extremely weak (5-25%). Thirty of the 107 subjects made no accurate judgments on the misused possessive determiners (see Table 5).

Table 5
Number of Students at Five Accuracy Levels on TBP

%Accuracy	School 1 (Grade 6)	School 2 (Grade 6)	School 3 (Grade 5)	School 4 (Grade 5)
80 - 100%	5	2	2	1
60 - 75%	4	3	6	6
30 - 55%	5	8	3	6
5 - 25%	7	7	3	9
0%	5	9	10	6
Total Subjects	26	29	24	28

The average number of correct judgments on the 20 misused his/her according to school are:

School 1 (Grade 6)	7.9
School 2 (Grade 6)	5.3
School 3 (Grade 5)	5.9
School 4 (Grade 5)	6.2

Thus, despite the focus on form of Task II, and no time constraint, most subjects do not reveal competence in judgment of the incorrect usage of his/her.

In order to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the subjects according to school, grade level (5/6), sex, or the method of task

administration (with/without hearing recording) on various aspects of TBP performance, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. The analysis separately examined performance on judgments of the possessive determiners according to their masculine/feminine distinction as well as according to the distinction as to whether the determiner was modifying a kin or a non-kin noun, for example, his mother/his arm. These are identified as: KM (his with kin noun), KF (her with kin noun), NKM (his with non-kin noun) and NKF, (her with non-kin noun).

The ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences among schools nor were there significant differences between grade 5 and grade 6 groups on TBP performance. There was, however, a significant difference in performance according to method. (Recall that two groups read the text; the two other groups read the text while hearing it read from a recording and then re-reading it silently.) The groups which read TBP without hearing the recording performed significantly better on judgments of NKM, $F(1,105) = 4.23$, $p < .05$. Further analysis showed that, while there was not a significant difference between the two grade 5 classes, nor between grades 5 and 6 according to method, there was a significant difference between the two grade 6 classes' performance according to method. School 1, which had performed the task without hearing the recording, did significantly better, $F(1,53) = 8.73$, $p < .01$, in

judging the incorrect masculine form NKM. There was no significant difference in the other possessive determiner judgments between the two grade 6 classes.

The ANOVA was also used to investigate any differences in judgment performance according to sex. (There were 51 female and 56 male subjects.) Significant differences were found with the female subjects outperforming the males in every category.

These results, in addition to revealing the performance difference according to sex also revealed important other differences, that is, judgment result differences according to the kinship factor and according to M/F distinction. Judgments on NKM and NKF were more accurate than were judgments on KM and KF. Furthermore, judgments on KF and NKF averaged higher accuracy than judgments on KM and NKM. Table 6 provides a summary of results for gender and kinship distinctions as judged by male and female subjects.

In order to investigate these differences further, matched t tests were carried out for all subjects and subgroups according to grade, method and sex. These t tests compared judgments of all determiners preceding kinship nouns (KM and KF) with all determiners preceding non-kin nouns (NKM and NKF). They also compared results for KM and NKM with KF and NKF.

Table 6**ANOVA Results for Gender and Kinship Distinctions**

Determiner	Means		F ratio	df
	Female (N=51)	Male (N=56)		
Kin - masculine	1.37	.57	11.71**	(1,105)
Kin - feminine	2.24	1.18	9.99*	(1,105)
Non-kin - masculine	2.47	.73	31.64**	(1,105)
Non-kin - feminine	2.82	1.56	11.10**	(1,105)

Note. Maximum score = 5.

*p < .01.

**p < .001.

Results of the t tests indicated significant differences in the performance of subjects and sub-groups for both the gender comparison and the kinship comparison (see Table 7). In all cases, judgment accuracy on KF/NKF was significantly higher than on KM/NKF. Accuracy of judgment on NKM/NKF was significantly higher than on KM/KF. Interpretation of these significant differences will be dealt with in Chapter V, Discussion.

Table 7

Matched t Tests for Mean Scores: Masculine /Feminine and Kin/Non-kin

	N	<u>Kin + Non-kin</u>		t	<u>Masculine + Feminine</u>		
		Mas.	Fem.		Kin	Non-kin	t
<u>All</u>							
<u>Subjects</u>	107	2.51	3.84	-5.85**	2.64	3.72	-5.91**
<u>Grade</u>							
5	52	2.31	3.77	-5.36**	2.42	3.65	-4.66**
6	55	2.71	3.91	-3.33*	2.84	3.78	-3.69**
<u>Method</u>							
With							
Recording	57	2.09	3.75	-4.54**	2.56	3.28	-3.00*
Without							
Recording	50	3.00	3.94	-3.95**	2.72	4.22	-5.50**
<u>Sex</u>							
F	51	3.84	5.06	-4.76**	3.61	5.29	-5.63**
M	56	1.30	2.73	-3.89**	1.75	2.29	-2.74*

Note. Maximum score = 10.

* p < .01. **p < .001.

Since more than 28% of the subjects made no accurate judgments on any possessive determiner, there was no possibility of interpreting their results. It was decided, therefore, to run the t tests eliminating such subjects (see Table 8). Again, there were highly significant differences throughout judgments across grades, method and sex (39 females, 38 males). Again, subjects performed better on judging the NKM/NKF than on KM/KF and also judging KF/NKF

compared to KM/NKM. Levels of significance for differences were all greater than .001.

Table 8

Matched t Tests Excluding Subjects Making No Accurate Judgments: Masculine /Feminine and Kin/Non-kin

	N	<u>Kin + Non-kin</u>		t	<u>Masculine + Feminine</u>		
		Mas.	Fem.		Kin	Non-kin	t
<u>All</u>							
<u>Subjects</u>	77	3.49	5.34	-6.25**	3.66	5.17	-6.31**
<u>Grade</u>							
5	36	3.33	5.44	-6.17**	3.50	5.28	-5.15**
6	41	3.63	5.24	-3.45**	3.80	5.07	-3.85**
<u>Method</u>							
With							
Recording	42	2.83	5.10	-4.85**	3.48	4.45	-3.08*
Without							
Recording	35	4.29	5.63	-4.23**	3.89	6.03	-6.38**
<u>Sex</u>							
F	39	5.03	6.62	-5.11**	4.72	6.92	-6.25**
M	38	1.92	4.03	-4.15**	2.58	3.37	-2.82*

Note. Maximum score = 10

*p < .01. **p < .001.

In order to investigate possible GJ differences between KM and KF and between NKM and NKF, additional matched t tests were run for all subjects and sub-groups by grade, method and sex. These tests were carried out for both the total population (See Table 9) and again eliminating

subjects who had provided no correct judgments (see Table 10).

Table 9

Matched t Tests for Mean Scores: Kin and Non-kin

	N	<u>Kin</u>		t	<u>Non-kin</u>		t
		Mas.	Fem.		Mas.	Fem.	
<u>All</u>							
<u>Subjects</u>	107	.95	1.68	-5.71***	1.56	2.16	-4.26***
<u>Grade</u>							
5	52	.75	1.67	-5.54***	1.56	2.10	-2.88**
6	55	1.15	1.69	-2.87**	1.56	2.22	-3.12**
<u>Method</u>							
With							
Recording	57	.86	1.70	-4.06***	1.23	2.05	-3.78***
Without							
Recording	50	1.06	1.66	-4.38***	1.94	2.28	-2.08*
<u>Sex</u>							
F	51	1.37	2.24	-5.00***	2.47	2.82	-1.97
M	56	.57	1.18	-3.25**	.73	1.55	-3.91***

Note. Maximum score = 5

*p < .05. ** p < .01. ***p < .001.

With one exception, the t tests revealed statistically significant differences for all subjects and sub-groups in judgment of the KM compared to KF and in judgments of NKM compared to NKF. Judgments on the feminine forms were higher in all instances. The one exception was that no statistically significant difference was found for either

total population or the selected population for female subjects' GJs between NKM and NKF.

Table 10

Matched t Tests for Mean Scores Excluding Subjects Making No Accurate Judgments: Kin and Non-kin

	N	<u>Kin</u>		t	<u>Non-kin</u>		t
		Mas.	Fem.		Mas.	Fem.	
<u>All</u>							
<u>Subjects</u>	77	1.32	2.34	-6.07***	2.17	3.00	-4.40***
<u>Grade</u>							
5	36	1.08	2.42	-6.44***	2.25	3.03	-2.97**
6	41	1.54	2.27	-2.93**	2.10	2.98	-3.21**
<u>Method</u>							
With							
Recording	42	1.17	2.31	-4.27***	1.67	2.79	-3.95***
Without							
Recording	35	1.51	2.37	-4.78***	2.77	3.26	-2.12*
<u>Sex</u>							
F	39	1.79	2.93	-5.41***	3.23	3.69	-1.99
M	38	.84	1.74	-3.40**	1.08	2.29	-4.17***

Note. Maximum score = 5.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Accuracy of judgments on distractors

In general the four classes performed similarly in judgments of distractors. There were very few students who were highly accurate in identifying the incorrect forms. The highest score was 9 out of 12 and there were many zeros.

Averages for judgments on the distractors, according to schools, were:

School 1	(Grade 6)	2.8
School 2	(Grade 6)	2.3
School 3	(Grade 5)	1.7
School 4	(Grade 5)	2.0

An ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences on distractor judgment among the schools, $F(3,103) = 1.90$. There was a significant difference between grade 5 and grade 6 performance, $F(1,105) = 3.94$, $p < .05$. Further analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between grade 5 and grade 6 within method. The grade 6 which had read the text without hearing it on tape outperformed the grade 5 having done so, $F(1,48) = 8.54$, $p < .01$. There were no other significant differences on distractor judgments. It may be useful to emphasize that this includes no statistically significant differences in judgments according to sex. (Recall that the ANOVA revealed significant differences according to sex with the females outperforming the males in every category of possessive determiner judgment.)

Misjudgments

Misjudgments here refers to any correct word which was judged as incorrect. Again, there were not great differences

among schools. Total average misjudgments, according to school, are:

School 1	(Grade 6)	6.8
School 2	(Grade 6)	7.7
School 3	(Grade 5)	10.6
School 4	(Grade 5)	9.2

The two grade 6 classes made a total of 402 misjudgments; the two grade 5 classes, 492. There were 449 misjudgments in sentences which, in fact, contained no errors. There were 445 errors in sentences which did contain an incorrect form.

It is important to note that very few of these misjudgments were on a correct usage of his/her. Although there were students in each class who did make such an error, a total of 28 subjects provided only 41 tokens of this kind. In 17 instances a correct her was judged as incorrect, and in 24 instances, a correct his was misjudged.

It is my assumption that this very low incidence of misjudgment of correct possessive determiners indicates that the accurate judgments of misused his/her were, in fact, genuine judgments. That is, they were neither spurious nor random. Other judgments, whether accurate or not, are assumed to be genuine as well. Task III sought confirmation of this assumption.

Task III: The Oral Interview

In the OI subjects were asked to provide information as to the bases of their judgments. Twenty-two students participated. They represented the entire range of judgment performance of this class, that is, from the highest scorers on both his/her and distractor misuse to those who made no accurate judgments whatsoever.

Analysis of the tapes from these OIs revealed that subjects seemed to fall into three general groups. Group I consists of a few subjects who made accurate or fairly accurate judgments and were able to clearly articulate the bases of these judgments giving reference to some grammatical or metalinguistic reasoning. Group II consists of subjects who made few accurate judgments but who were also able to articulate the bases on which judgments (accurate and inaccurate) had been formed. Group III consists of three subjects who made no accurate judgments. It was found that even these subjects were somewhat able to provide justification for their judgment choices. However, it appears that it was often the case that an item was judged as incorrect by these subjects when they did not understand a word, or perceived a spelling error. (It must be emphasized that these groups are only general types.) Due to the nature of the task, results can only be reported impressionistically. Samples of judgment explanations are provided below.

I = interviewer; S = subject; () indicates the subject number

Group I

Many Accurate Judgments/ Clear Grammatical Explanation.

I: All right. Mark and...

S: Mark and his father...Well, it's, the father is not a girl, and uh, well, his goes better for a g^ for a boy. It's, it's a father.

I: OK.

S: It's uh, masculine.

I: All right! What if this word were mother? Would it change?

S: Yeah, her.

I: You would say Mark and her mother?

S: No, and his mother!

I: How come?

S: Because it's, uh, well, Mark is a boy ... (8)

Group II

Few Accurate Judgments/Clear Explanations.

S: Because David is a boy.

I: mhm, OK.

S: and, uh, it's his.

I: Excellent. And the next page..."She is carrying a present in his arm.

S: Uh, it's a girl and, uh, they write his.

I: mhm. What should I have written?

S: Her. (3)

I: Is that right, to say "in his arm?"

S: No, cause it's a girl.

S: I'm not sure because, he - don't say uh, he is 12.

I: What do we say?

S: Mais, uh, uh, he has he has uh, because he is,
he's not uh, he's not 12. (1)

I: What other mistake did you see?

S: Uh, it take an s because it's six years.

I: What about this sentence, uh, we're talking about
Diane. She has a party hat on his head. Is that
all right with you, that sentence? Does that
sound like good English to you?

S: (No response)

I: Sounds OK?

S: Yeah.

I: All right, she has balloons in his hand. Does that
sound OK to you?

S: Yes.

I: It does, OK. ...And now this page. The children
are all having the good time.

S: The childrens. It take an s.

I: It does take an s?

S: Yeah. (14)

Group III

No Accurate Judgments/Poor Explanations.

I: All right, you think this is a mistake on the first page. Why?

S: Mhm. He's having a party.

I: Mhm.

S: I think, uh, this don't have a sense. He make a party or like that, but uh...

I: Not "he's having".

I: OK, what about this one on page 2?

S: ...but I think "pretty new dress" is don't make a sense. (10)

I: All right, on page 1, what's the first mistake you, you'd found?

S: His.

I: His. And what's wrong with that?

S: Because uh, party with, a friend, not uh, with, uh, his friend. (2)

Thus, study and analysis of these OIs indicate that the judgments, whether accurate or inaccurate, were

authentic judgments. Some subjects were able to provide explicit information as to the bases of their judgments; others seemed to rely on intuition. A number of subjects provided explicit "wrong" rule information when explaining their judgment decisions. The interviews revealed that even the poorest performers made judgments according to rules active in their ILs. Further interpretation and discussion of these results will be presented in Chapter V.

Chapter V

Discussion

In this chapter a summary of the analysis of the personal pronoun system of young francophone learners in intensive ESL programs is presented. Particular emphasis has been placed on investigating the acquisition of the possessive determiners his/her. Results of each of three tasks administered, the Picture Card Game, The Birthday Party, and the Oral Interview will be discussed in light of previous research and current interpretation.

The Picture Card Game

Task I, an oral communication activity, the Picture Card Game (PCG) had been administered to 30 learners in a grade 6 class at the end of their five month intensive ESL course (see Chapter III). Analysis of the transcripts of the students' speech was carried out according to person, case, and gender. Number was not included in analysis since the task elicited almost no tokens of the plural.

Person

Analysis of the transcripts of the (PCG) revealed that errors in the first person singular form of the pronoun were non-existent in the learners' IL. That is, there were no tokens of error. While the task did not intrinsically call

for first person usage, it was nevertheless supplied by most of the 30 subjects. Twenty-four of the learners employed some form of the first person singular, the highest number being 28 tokens. However, virtually all the first person tokens supplied by subjects were of the pronoun I (rather than my, me, or mine) and by far the most frequent representations were found in only two phrases, "I think..." and "I don't know...". (The latter phrase was not a response to a question but often employed when a subject was unsure about a detail in a picture.) Thus, data limitations do not permit a strong claim that first person has been fully acquired by the subjects (despite the total lack of error in what was produced) since almost all tokens were of just one form.

Forms of the second person singular were supplied without error by 16 subjects, not supplied by 12 subjects and used incorrectly by 2 subjects. The fact that only half of the subjects used any second person forms is quite appropriate within the context of the task which does not specifically require its use. The 16 subjects who did correctly use second person forms generally provided only a few tokens. Of the two subjects who used the second person singular incorrectly, one used your incorrectly five times, four times in place of his which was never used, and one time in place of her which was correctly employed two other times. The second subject provides a more notable example

of a learner who overgeneralizes your. This subject supplied the form 22 times -- 9 times in place of his and 13 times in place of her. It is important to note the consistency of this learner's inaccurate use of the second person form, an indication that she was following a rule of her IL when overgeneralizing your.

Third person was supplied by 26 of the 30 subjects. The high rate of occurrence for all third person forms is assumed to be a result of the task itself, since the PCG is descriptive in nature and the pictures involved depict people in various scenes and activities. All third person tokens were correctly used in reference to a "third person" -- a figure in the pictures. However, three of these subjects also provided two or three tokens of the definite article where a pronoun was called for.

Zobl (1985) has suggested that learners follow a developmental path proceeding toward competence in the use of the third person possessive determiner rule. He states:

A feature analysis of this rule reveals that it comprises several subcomponents. All possessive determiners share the semantic feature "definite," this being the most general meaning component. More specific, but still more general than gender, is the feature "person", in this case third person. Gender is the most specific feature of

the meaning components that make up the third person singular. (p. 336)

He suggests that stages of development in rule use are: a) no use, or use of the article the, b) use of your and, finally, c) the target language form (pp. 336-7). Zobl explains further:

Your is more complex than the article, since it does contain the feature "person"... For a learner who is sorting out "person", the choice of your is well motivated since it is invariable with regard to the most specific feature, gender. (pp. 336-7)

The PCG analysis has revealed two instances of the overgeneralization of your to refer to the third person, and three of substitution of the article. In all five of these instances, the obligatory context called for was either his or her. While it is impossible to interpret these data in such a way as to support or disclaim the order of development proposed by Zobl, they do indicate that these uses sometimes precede reliable use of his/her. However, only 5 subjects exhibited such behaviour, and 4 out of the 5 provided only a few tokens mixed in with correct use. These data do not permit us to conclude that such usage is a step in the developmental path of all learners, although it appears to be for some.

Thus, regarding the marking of person in the pronouns produced by the learner, analysis of the data revealed that

errors were exceedingly rare. That is, when errors were present in pronoun form, it was rare that one person was substituted in place of another person.

Further claims as to acquisition of person cannot be made due to gaps in the data. These gaps are considered to be related to the task. First, since the task was one of oral communication, it was possible for subjects to avoid some forms of which they were unsure. Secondly, due to the nature of the descriptive task, obligatory contexts were provided only for the third person.

Case

Regarding the acquisition of case, data analysis again revealed very few errors. Transcripts were analyzed following Quirk and Greenbaum (1979, p. 101).

The subjective case was used correctly by 24 out of the 25 subjects who provided it. The objective case was provided by only 12 out of the 30 subjects but all tokens which were provided were correct as to case. The genitive case was supplied by 17 out of 30 subjects, with all tokens provided being appropriate as to case. One of these subjects, as well as two who produced no genitive pronouns, also provided the definite article in place of the genitive.

Gender

As for the acquisition of gender, 24 out of the 30 subjects supplied neuter forms, and all tokens provided were in a context calling for the neuter. Twenty-two subjects

supplied the masculine gender. However, it was provided with complete accuracy by only 3 (14%) of the twenty-two. The feminine form was supplied by only 12 out of 30 subjects, and with complete accuracy by only one of them (.08%). It is to be noted that all of the pictures involved in this task provided contexts for use of both masculine and feminine gender except for one picture which provided a context for only the feminine. Under these circumstances, the fact that fewer subjects provided feminine tokens than masculine gives support to a hypothesis that subjects either did not know the feminine forms, or were unsure of them and chose a strategy of avoidance.

Of the 22 subjects who provided tokens of the masculine, more than 68% (15/22) overgeneralized the forms in the subjective, objective, and genitive cases. The trend was for subjects to provide masculine forms in obligatory contexts, especially for the feminine, even when the possessed object nouns were grammatically feminine in their L1 by virtue of grammatical gender (e.g., la tête, la main) or naturally (e.g., "a girl; he have a pony tail and uh, he have a skirt blue and sweater blue"). It seems that there may be two factors which converge to account for this phenomenon. Assuming that the masculine is the unmarked gender form, and that the marked gender form is the feminine (see Chapter II), the preponderance of masculine forms would be the result of: a) the learner adopting the unmarked

(masculine) as the initial hypothesis, and b) the marked (feminine) form being less amenable to transfer from L1. It appears that these are language learning strategies which reveal the underlying influence of universal grammar.

White (1987c) discusses markedness and transfer in SLA. The findings from the PCG analysis seem to contradict White's theory that a learner will adopt as an initial hypothesis a marked form from L1 rather than reverting to the unmarked form. That is, analysis has revealed many examples where the learner does not transfer the marked feminine form but chooses to overgeneralize the unmarked masculine. However, it should be noted that White's claim is not that a marked form from L1 would always transfer and be used before the unmarked form, but only that there may be circumstances where it will.

Regarding analysis and interpretation of IL learner errors, Bley-Vroman (1983) discusses the "comparative fallacy," that is, "the mistake of studying the systematic character of one language by comparing it to another" (p. 6). Focussing on work of Tarone, Frauenfelder, and Selinker (1976) and their characterization of systematicity in IL, he notes the danger of defining "systematicity" according to the percentage of IL tokens provided in obligatory contexts in L2. The authors had defined as "systematic" correct usage of 90% or more in obligatory contexts as well as correct usage below 10%. Correct usage which fell between

10% and 90% was referred to as "variable." As Bley-Vroman points out, analysis carried out according to such terms may obscure and lead to misinterpretation of the state of a learner's IL. For example, when the masculine is overgeneralized, it is being used systematically despite the fact that it is often being used erroneously. As a learner proceeds toward mastery of the target language, for example, providing both masculine and feminine tokens, the IL is analyzed as being more variable. This obscures the fact that the learner no longer overgeneralizes to the same extent as previously. Thus, what is systematic is not automatically interpretable as "acquired". In the same vein, since the masculine is so frequently overgeneralized, care must be taken that such overgeneralization does not lead to (false) claims of actual acquisition. Therefore, one must hesitate to accept a statement such as Adiv's (see Chapter II) that the masculine is "mastered" before the feminine.

It is to be noted that both male and female subjects overgeneralized the masculine. There were five subjects who also overgeneralized the feminine; all five were female. While one might speculate that the female subjects were more 'tuned in' to the feminine forms, it is not possible to offer any genuine interpretation of such data. However, since only 12 subjects provided tokens of feminine forms, the fact that nearly half also overgeneralized the form is

of interest. Nevertheless, interpretation of these findings is not possible.

In sum, analysis has revealed that after 5 months of intensive ESL classes, person and case are not problematic in the pronoun systems of the ILs of most subjects, but gender is largely unacquired, at least in oral production. Many subjects exhibited a tendency for overgeneralization of the masculine, often doing so with frequency and systematicity. A few subjects provided examples of cross-over gender use, (masculine for feminine and vice versa). The findings as to the difficulty of gender acquisition are in general accord with previous research on possessive determiners reported on in Chapter II. They also provide some further empirical support for the hierarchy of acquisition of pertinent features in pronouns put forward by Felix and Simmet (1982), that is, case >number >person >gender. Since number has not been included in analysis in this study and there is little evidence of problems with case or person, the order of acquisition cannot be defined. That gender is the last feature to be acquired, however, is strongly upheld.

Analysis of the data has focussed on person, case, and gender as independent of one another and care must be taken that analysis done in this manner is not misleading. That is, as mentioned above, there were generally few errors of person or case. However, there were gender errors within

both person and case. For example, when he was substituted for she, the third person was correctly provided so there was no error in person but there was a gender error. When her was substituted for his, the genitive case was being correctly used, despite the gender error. Thus, while pronoun analysis according to features does provide insight as to which features are first reliably used, it must be remembered that they are not realized fully independently of one another.

The Birthday Party

A grammaticality judgment task, The Birthday Party, was administered to 107 grade 5 and grade 6 francophone subjects in four intensive ESL classes. The task required that the subjects identify 20 misused hi./her forms as well as 12 distractor errors. There were 12 correct uses of his/her also included in the text. Discussion of the analysis of the results will be dealt with in two parts. Part I will deal with the general performance of the subjects on the GJ task according to grade (5/6), sex (M/F) and method (with/without recording). Part II, in light of the work of Zobl, will more closely examine the performance of the subjects with reference to their judgments according to the possession of kin/non-kin and masculine/feminine nouns.

Part I: General performance on TBP.

Analysis of the results of the grammaticality judgment task revealed that subjects were generally not proficient in recognizing incorrect use of the possessive determiners his/her. Only 10 of the 107 subjects might be considered highly accurate, scoring 80% or more in recognition of the deviant use. Thirty subjects were unable to identify any of the misused his/her as erroneous.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that there were no significant differences between schools nor between grades. One grade 6 class, which had read the text while hearing it read on a recording, did perform significantly worse on one aspect of the test than the other grade 6 which had read the text without hearing it. That is, on judgments where the masculine possessive determiner incorrectly preceded a non-kin noun (e.g., his dress), there was a significant difference in performance between the two grade 6 classes according to method. There were no other significant differences in judgment performance between these classes.

An ANOVA, which had revealed no significant differences according to school or grade and only one significant difference between two grade 6 classes according to method, revealed highly significant differences in subjects' performance according to sex. It was found that the 51 female subjects performed significantly better than the 56

male subjects in every category of possessive determiner judgment. That is, the female subjects were much better able than the males to identify as incorrect both masculine and feminine misused possessive determiners preceding both kin and non-kin nouns. It is important to note that significant differences occurred in all judgments relating to the possessive determiners, but did not occur on judgments of the 12 distractor items.

These results suggest that, by virtue of being female, these subjects may have had a heightened awareness of gender distinction and were correspondingly less influenced by markedness and transfer constraints of the feminine. However, further research is certainly necessary before such data can be interpreted with any reliability.

Regarding the performance on the distractor errors, subjects were generally not successful at recognizing the variety of errors sprinkled throughout the test booklet. There were no significant differences according to schools. There was one difference between grade 5 and grade 6 by method (text heard and read vs. read only). There was no significant difference according to sex. No class mean reached even 25% accuracy rate on the various distractor errors. However, low averages are not unexpected since the distractor items were of many types and there was no possibility of noting a pattern of error as there was with the possessive determiners.

In sum, the subjects were not generally proficient in making judgments on misused possessive determiners nor on a variety of other errors included in the task as distractor items. Few differences were observed according to school, grade, or method. Sex was the only variable to reveal significant differences with female subjects outperforming males on all categories of possessive determiner judgments.

Part II: Gender and kinship distinction analysis.

Zobl has suggested that possessive determiners associated with nouns including kin or the human feature are the marked form, the non-kin or nonhuman feature the unmarked (Chapter II). The fact that in one instance a significant difference was revealed on judgments of the NKM form with no such differences for NKF, KM, or KF may provide support for Zobl's claim and may reveal an order of acquisition for possessive determiners. In ascending order of difficulty/development, from least marked to most marked, we might expect to find: (- = unmarked; + = marked)

Masculine Non-kin (-/-)

Masculine Kin (-/+) Feminine Non-kin (+/-)

Feminine Kin (+/+)

That is, a non-kin item with a masculine possessor (both being unmarked) would be the first acquired. An item which had one unmarked and one marked feature, that is, either masculine (-) and human (+) or feminine (+) and nonhuman (-)

would be acquired next. Whether the gender or the kinship role would carry more weight remains to be determined. The last to be acquired would be an item that was double-marked, that is feminine (+) and human (+). This hierarchy has been kept in mind in the examination of TBP results.

When analysis was carried out according to correct judgments on the gender and kinship factors of the nouns following his/her, highly significant differences were revealed.

T tests were performed for all subjects and subgroups according to grade, method and sex. Results of these tests, with only one exception, indicated highly significant differences for all subjects and subgroups on judgments according to gender with the misused feminine possessive determiner noted with significantly more accuracy. That is, judgments of the incorrectly employed her preceding a kin noun (e.g., her father in a context requiring his father) and the incorrectly employed her preceding a non-kin noun (e.g., "He hopes David will enjoy reading her new book") were significantly more accurate than the judgments of incorrect masculine forms employed. (Recall that there were 10 incorrect tokens of both masculine and feminine. Each 10 tokens were divided so as to precede five nouns depicting kin and five depicting non-kin possession.)

Results of the t tests also revealed highly significant differences in judgment accuracy according to the kinship

distinction for all subjects and subgroups. That is, recognition of errors was significantly higher on incorrect possessive determiners preceding non-kin nouns than on those preceding kin nouns. For example, "She's carrying a present in his arm" (non-kin) was more frequently recognized as inaccurate than "Mrs. Ryan will take a picture of his husband with David" (kin). "David is playing with her new plane" (non-kin) would be more frequently recognized as inaccurate than "Marc and her father picked it out" (kin).

Regarding gender in the determiners, it might appear that the recognition of errors in the feminine possessive determiner indicates that the feminine was better acquired than the masculine. However, such an interpretation seems to be unwarranted. It appears, rather, that the learners are again overgeneralizing the masculine by over-accepting the form. That is, when a masculine form was misused, subjects were significantly more likely to accept it than to accept a misused feminine form. (This is especially true for male subjects.) Analysis of the results of this task indicate that most learners are still in the process of acquiring control of the gender distinction in their ILs. Due to the fact that there is not only the gender difficulty but the different functioning of systems in French and English for choosing the gender of the possessive determiner, according to the object possessed or to the possessor, the problem for the learner is complex indeed.

In choosing to employ a grammaticality judgment task to investigate possessive determiner acquisition, I had thought that I might find evidence of a 'monitor' which assisted subjects in recognizing incorrect usage when focussed on form. As discussed above, however, subjects were generally not at all proficient at identifying the errors. This may be due to one of the conditions of the Monitor Model put forth by Krashen (1981) not being met. That is, although the task focussed on form and the subjects had ample time, it appears that they did not, in fact know the appropriate gender forms. They did not possess competence exceeding that observed through a task focussed on communication. My initial assumption that focus on communication in oral tasks explained the high frequency of gender errors and that a form focussed task would provide evidence of greater competence was not supported by the investigation.

However, another interpretation remains possible. That is, despite the intent of the GJ task that the learners focus on form, perhaps they were really focussing on global meaning. Since the task was designed to test recognition of the possessive determiners within a story, where these determiners were used (or misused) in context, it may have unwittingly weakened the actual focus on form. Further research is called for to determine if this was, in fact, what occurred.

The Oral Interview

Twenty-two subjects from one of the grade 6 classes to which Task II, TBP, had been administered, took part in Task III, the Oral Interview. Transcripts of several interviews have been provided in Chapter IV. The main purpose of the OI was to obtain feedback on the GJ task and to verify that the judgments provided had, in fact, been genuine.

A number of the subjects were able to give highly explicit information regarding the bases of their judgments. For example, one subject pointed out that a word was "masculine" and therefore required his.

Some subjects were just as explicit, albeit inaccurate, in explaining their judgments. For example, several students judged as incorrect the /s/ on loves and plays in the sentence: "David loves baseball and plays every summer." They told me that since David was "just one" there should not be an /s/ on love and play. It appears that the plural rule is still being acquired and is also being overgeneralized. Other evidence supports this belief. For example, a number of subjects also marked 'children' as incorrect and explained to me that it 'needed' an /s/ because there were 'many.' Quite a few subjects correctly identified the error in the sentence: "It's a great parties", again telling me that it was "just one." The consistency of such judgments indicates two things: 1) students are, in fact, expressing genuine judgments and 2)

these judgments are based on active rules of the learners' ILs.

As noted above, the subjects were generally not proficient in making correct judgments. The judgments they did make, however, while not in accord with target language norms, provide important information on their ILs. The overgeneralization of the plural /s/ is an example.

Another example of a rule active in the ILs of the learners, is evidenced by the fact that many of the subjects judged as incorrect the verb /is/ in sentences such as "David is twelve years old" and "Annie is ten." Subjects were frequently quite explicit in explaining to me that the correct sentences should read: "David has twelve years old" and "Annie has ten." Since the verb "avoir" (have) is used with age in French, this appears to be a clear-cut case of negative transfer.

Suggestions for Further Study

Given the uncertainty as to the task influence of TBP on the poor performance of the subjects in grammaticality judgments of the possessive determiners, it appears worthwhile to administer a more focussed and explicit judgment task. For example, the same, or similar, sentences could be employed, arranged in random order, with possessive determiners underlined. The analysis of results of such a task would provide a possibility of direct comparison with

results of TBP performance and perhaps provide further insight into both judgment capabilities and the acquisition of the possessive determiners.

Another suggestion for further study is to pursue the issue of the overgeneralization of the feminine (which was observed as being produced by five female subjects in the PCG analysis.) That is, analysis might examine the propensity to overgeneralize one gender in relation to the gender of the subject.

A final suggestion for study is to further investigate the claims of Zobl as to the order of acquisition of unmarked (nonhuman, masculine) compared to marked (human, feminine.) Since both masculine human and feminine nonhuman linguistic items each contain one marked trait and one unmarked trait, a study (also focussing on the possessive determiner) could be done investigating acquisition of just these two types. Results of such a study might indicate which feature (i.e., gender or kinship) carries more markedness weight in SLA.

Summary

The results of analysis presented in this thesis provide insight on the acquisition of the possessive determiner. These results deal specifically with francophone learners in intensive ESL programs but it is to

be hoped that they have greater generalizability. That remains to be determined by further study.

Two research questions were investigated in this thesis.

1) Is there a difference between what ESL learners produce as possessive determiners and what they recognize as appropriate usage?

2) If so, what are the patterns which emerge?

The tasks employed to investigate the questions have revealed that there does not appear to be a great difference between what these learners produce and what they recognize. The consistent patterns are the overgeneralization of the masculine in both production and recognition. Despite the higher recognition of error for misused feminine possessive determiners than masculine, it seems that this is, in fact, further overgeneralization (over-acceptance) of the masculine. The possibility of altering these acquisition patterns through classroom teaching and consciousness-raising remains to be tested.

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Appendix 1

Possible Combinations of Possessive Determiners and Nouns

Possible Combinations of Possessive Determiners and Nouns

Possessors

Masculine singular (MS)
Feminine singular (FS)
Masculine plural (MP)
Feminine plural (FP)

Possessed

Masculine singular (MS)
Feminine singular (FS)
Masculine plural (MP)
Feminine plural (FP)

Examples

MS-MS Il aime son livre.

FS-MS Elle aime son livre.

MS-FS Il aime sa voiture.

FS-FS Elle aime sa chatte.

MP-MP Il aime ses livres.

FS-MP Elle aime ses livres.

MP-FP Il aime ses voitures.

FS-FP Elle aime ses chattes.

MP-MS Ils aiment leur livre.

FP-MS Elles aiment leur livre.

MP-FS Ils aiment leur voiture.

FP-FS Elles aiment leur chatte.

MP-MP Ils aiment leurs livres.

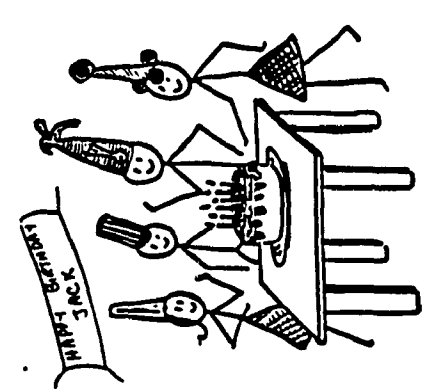
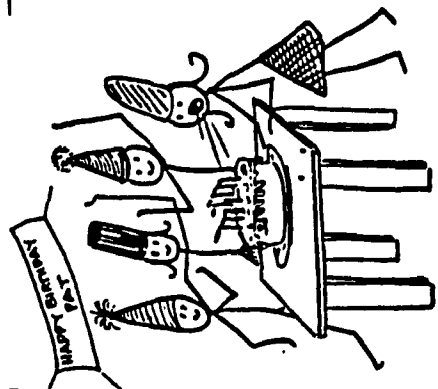
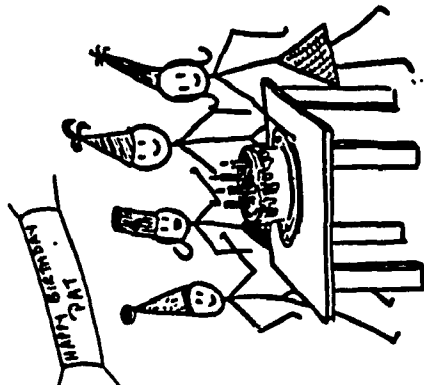
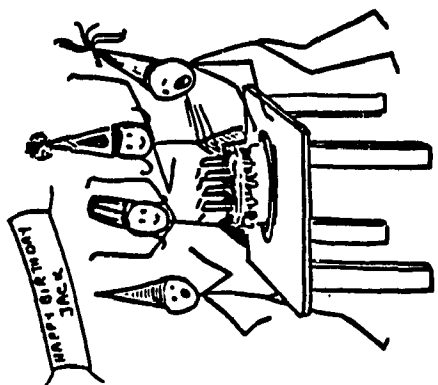
FP-MP Elles aiment leurs livres.

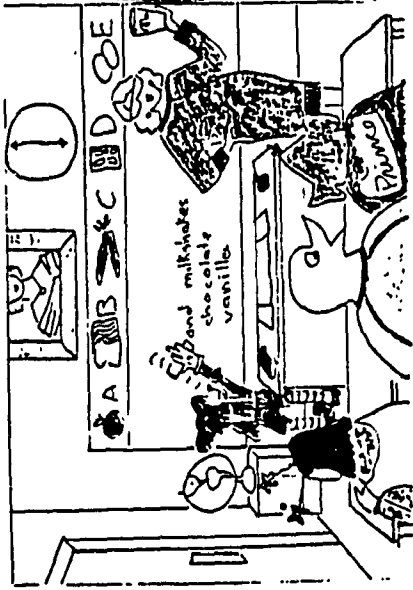
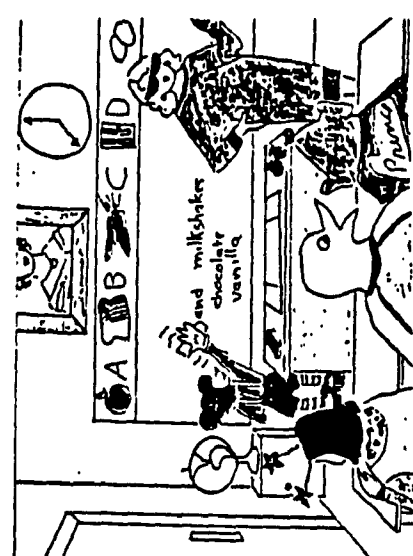
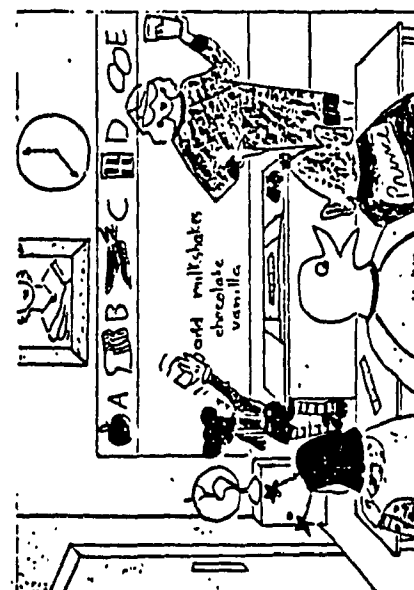
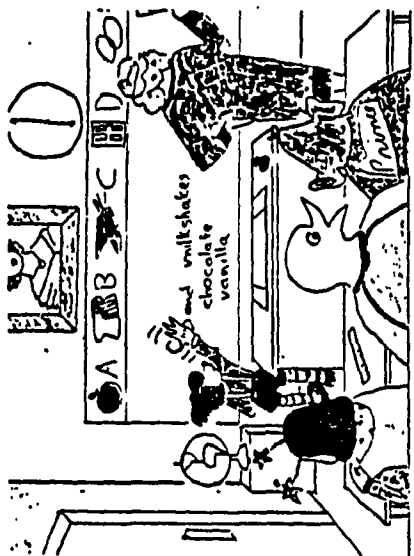
MP-FP Ils aiment leurs chaussures.

FP-FP Elles aiment leurs chausseures.

Appendix 2

Examples of Picture Card Game Pictures





Appendix 3

Transcripts of Speech Samples: Low, Medium, and High Proficiency

Example of low proficiency

S: Uh, I have a teacher. Have the -- under the --
under the -- have a clock.

I: mhm...

S: Is, uh, Halloween.

I: OK.

S: Uh, in, in the board write uh, "an, uh, milks^ --
shake, chocolate, vanille..."

I: mhm...

S: And, uh, on the desk I have the apple. I have, uh,
the teacher have the glasses. The teacher have the-
robe, uh -- b^ blue. Uh,, uh, under the board have
the -- how do you say "tableau?"

I: Blackboard.

S: OK, blackboard, and uh, one, uh, boy or girl is, uh,
the duck. I: mhm...

S: On the board, uh, write, uh, the alphabet...

I: mhm...

S: I have a apple, carrot, and door and uh, the one boy,
uh, the name is, uh, Prince...

I: mhm...

S: The, the Prince have a head, uh, green...

I: mhm...

S: The duck have, uh -- is, uh, yellow...

I: OK.

S: Oh, yes, uh, on the clock is, uh -- the time is, uh,
six o'clock.

I: OK. Is this the same as yours?

S: Yes.

Example of average proficiency

S: Is a class with, uh, uh, he have a picture frame in, in the top, in the top of, the board and you have a girl. He have a clock beside the picture frame. Uh, the, the little girl erase the board and he write "an milkshake, chocolate, vanilla. He have, uh, a professor, a teacher with, uh, a glass of milk, uh, he, and he have a -- a duck in front. And he have uh, he have a boy with , uh, uh, write Prince in the bottom and, uh, a girl with, uh, a dress blue and a, a blouse, uh, yellow with, uh, uh flower red...

I: OK. Anything else?

S: Uh, and uh boy's writing Prince is -- he have, uh, a head, uh, green with a long ears. And, uh, he have a, a door beside, uh, he have a door beside the board, and, uh, the, the duck, the, the boy is writing Prince and the little girl, uh, the little girl beside the duck is, uh, h^ she have, have a, a star under the head. Uh, yes... And, uh, is sitting in front the desk of, uh, a teacher...

I: OK.

S: Yes?

I: Anything else?

S: Uh, uh over the, the board he have a apple and writing A, a bread with a B, carrots with a C, uh...you have a -- oh, I don't know what's this.

I: I think it's a door.

S: Uh, a door a D and, uh, eggs with a E. And a teacher have a glasses and a dress -- black. Uh, he have a s^, a cherry on the desk of a professor, and a, a ruler.

I: OK. Is that the same as yours?

S: Yes.

Example of high proficiency

S: Uh, there is a -- I don't know if it's a girl, uh, she's erasing the board and it's written "an milkshake chocolate, vanilla." And, uh, the teacher with, uh, glasses is, uh, have something in his right hand. I think it's a glass, and uh, su^ - somebody behind her back at the -- at the right, has, uh, it's written Prince in the back and, uh, up the blackboard, there is a clock. It's, uh, uh, twelve-thirty, uh, noon. Noon, uh thirty past noon. And uh, there is, uh, uh, how do you say "cadre?" I don't remember.

I: Frame.

S: Picture frame.

I: mhm... picture frame.

S: Uh, and upper beside the clock and there's a, a woman in, uh, inside. There's uh, a globe, uh, beside the, the boy or the girl who's erasing, and, uh, there is an apple on the teacher's desk and a book. And, uh, on the blackboard upper there is a - an apple, after it's A, a bread - B, carrots - C and the other one I don't know. It's, it's written D and after there is egg and after its' written, uh, E. And, uh, the teacher have a dress, a purple dress I think. Uh, and, uh, in the middle of the -- of the

children there is a, like a canard -- he has a like a face a canard. I don't know.

I: OK. A duck.

S: A duck, yes... and, uh, the little girl beside him has, uh, stars on his head, with, uh a sweater, uh, blue and, uh, yellow, with a dots, I think.

I: OK. Is this the one you have?

S: Yes.

Appendix 4

Text of the Grammaticality Judgment Task:

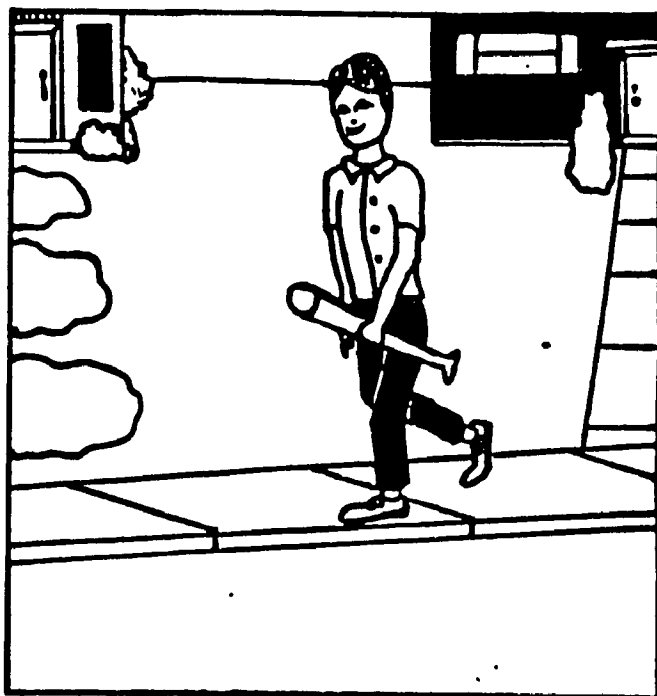
The Birthday Party



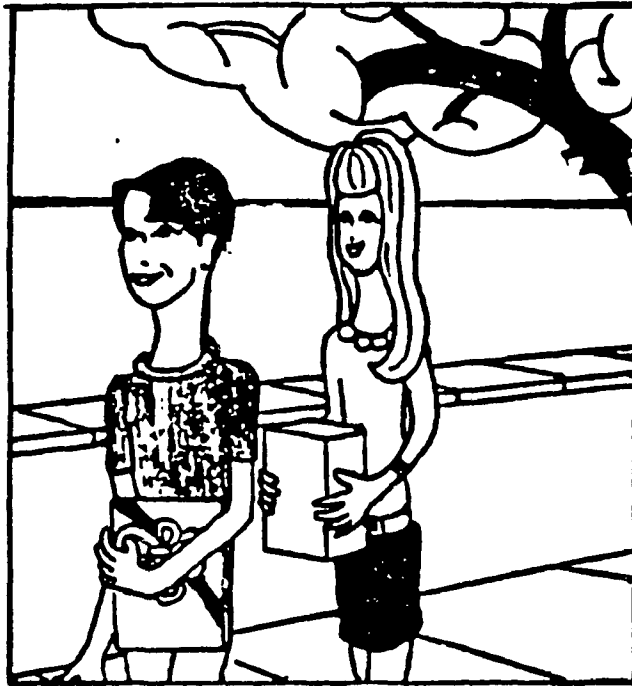
Today is David Ryan's birthday. He is twelve years old. He's having a party with his friends and family. Much people are invited. David's grandfather can't come because he moved to Florida last winter. David is happy to have a party but he misses her grandfather. He hopes everyone else can come.



Susan is going at David's party. She's carrying a present in his arm. It's a game. Her mother helped Susan to choose it. Susan is happy to be invited to the party and to wear his pretty new dress. She don't want to be late.



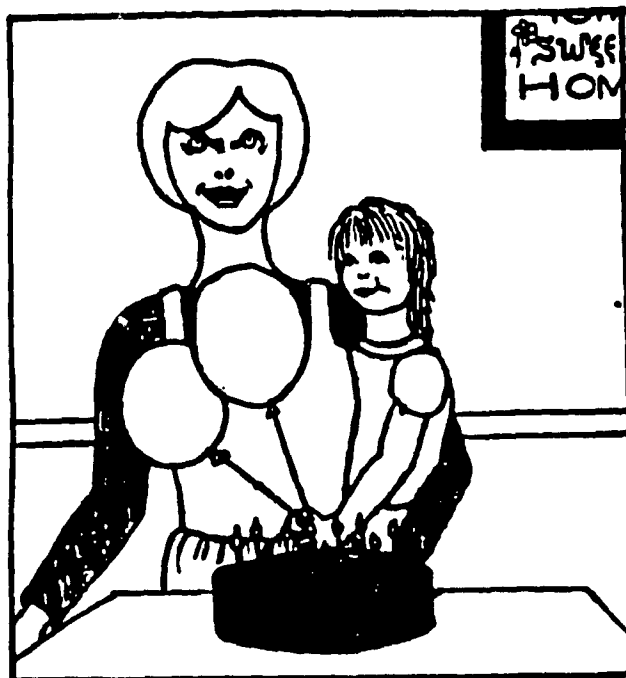
Marc is David's best friend. He lives just next door. Marc and David is in the same class at school. He has a special present for David in her hand. It's a baseball bat. Marc and her father picked it out. David loves baseball and plays every summer. Last year his team won the city championship.



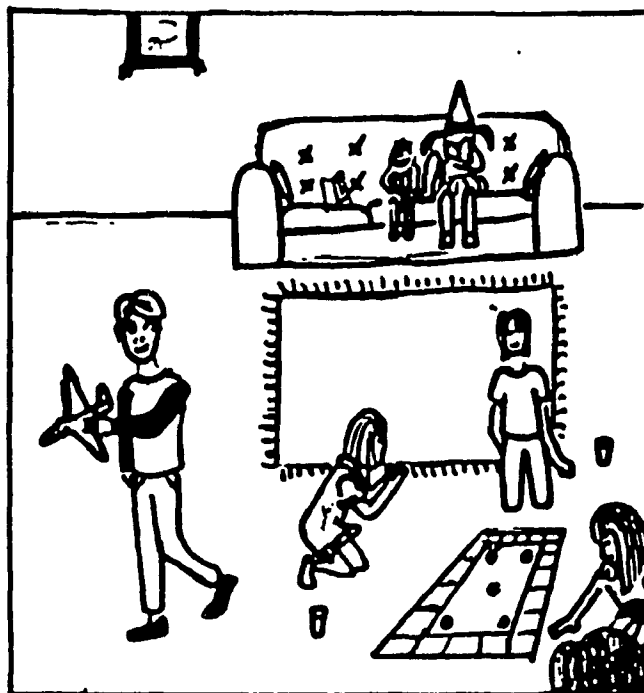
David's two cousins are also invited to the party. Annie is ten. She's tall and thin and his hair is blond. Her brother Eric is tall and thin too, but her hair is black. He's twelve. Now David and his cousin are the same age. Annie is bringing her cousin a model plane and Eric is give him a book. He hopes David will enjoy reading her new book.



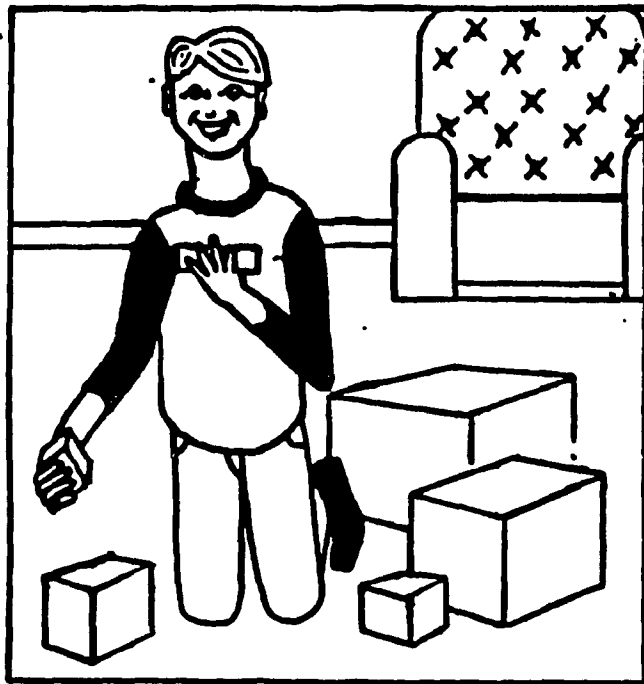
David is excited to see your friends. His younger sister Diane is excited too. She has a party hat on his head. She has balloons in his hand. Diane thinks birthday parties are super. Her birthday is on July. She will be six year old.



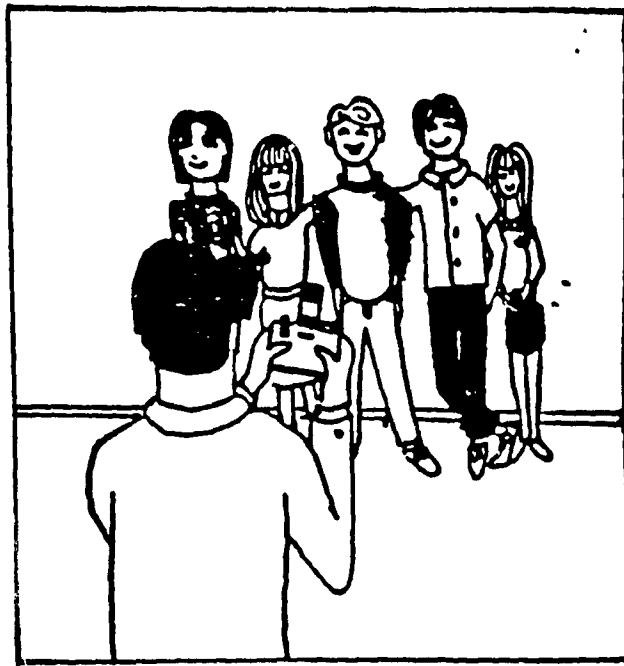
There is a baby sister too. Her name is Carole. Carole is holding balloons that his sister Diane gave her. His mother is showing her the candles on David's birthday cake. It's chocolate. David's mother prepared the cake for his son's party. Diane prepared the lemonade. Everyone likes chocolate cake and lemonade!



The children are all having the good time. David is playing with her new plane. Diane is sitting near her baby sister. She's looking at his brother's birthday cards. Susan and Marc are playing a game with Eric and her sister. It's a great parties.



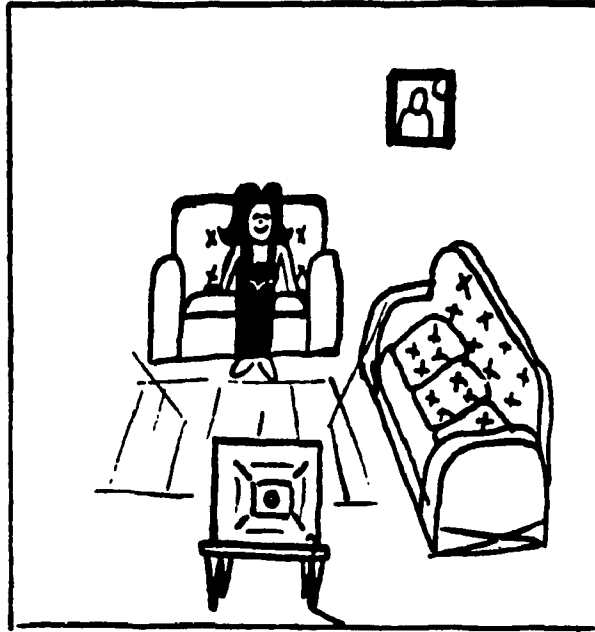
David's father, Mr. Ryan, is home from work early. He has a package for her son. It's big but it's not heavy. David opens the box. Another box is inside. David opens five boxes! In the last box is an envelope . It's a plane ticket for David to visit his grandfather in Florida! He is so happy!



Mr. Ryan have a new camera. He want to take many pictures of his son's party. First, he'll take a picture of David with her family and friends. Then he'll photograph her wife and the children. Finally, Mrs. Ryan will take a picture of his husband with David. The pictures will help everyone to remember David's wonderful party.

Appendix 5

Warm-up Page for the Grammaticality Judgment Task



Linda likes to watch television every day after school. Now she's watch Three's Company. It's her favorite programs. She likes Jack the best because he's funny. She likes the girls too. The program makes her laugh.

Appendix 6
Coding Sheet for PCG Analysis

Correct use ✓ Incorrect use X
 Required use *

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